

## PROVINCIAL COUNCIL.

The 31st Session of the Provincial Council was opened on Tuesday. The SPEAKER (Mr J. L. Gillies) read the proclamation convening the Council, and afterwards announced the return of new members for the following districts:—Mr B. Stout, Caversham; Mr H. Driver, Wakari; Mr W. Wood, Waihopai; and Mr H. S. Fish, jun., Dunedin. The Superintendent in the course of a lengthy address, said:—

The declared value of the imports during the past financial year has been £1,884,998, while the import duty amounted to £262,000, or equal to about one-third of the Customs revenue of the Colony: Of this sum none found its way into the Provincial Treasury.

The gold exported during the year was 169,212, as against 166,372 ounces during the previous year.

The total value of Provincial produce exported, inclusive of gold, amounts to £2,279,668, as against £1,190,000 for the year before. This is equal to £70 per head for each statute adult in the Province, an amount which is unequalled in any other part of the world.

The revenue received from gold duty, miners' rights, and business licenses on gold fields, has been £39,790 13s 2d, as against £41,816 in the previous year.

The total receipts from all sources into the Provincial Treasury during the year has been £336,900, as against £289,000 during the previous year. Last year we began with a bank overdraft amounting to £40,497, this year we commence with a balance in our favour of £16,698.

The expenditure during the past year, including payment of the overdraft, amounted to £279,522; of this sum, after providing for permanent charges, there had been expended on roads, bridges, and other public works, £92,874.

The immigration from the United Kingdom for the year amounted to 1,525, while there had been born in the Province 3,000 souls.

There had been sold 203,138 acres of rural land, distributed among 401 different purchasers; of town allotments there had been sold 761 acres, to 401 different purchasers; of agricultural leases on Goldfields there had been granted 136, covering an area of 10,389 acres.

The race at Naseby was being made. An expenditure of some £40,000 was being incurred, which is believed would amply recoup itself, and afford profitable employment to a large number of people who must otherwise have left the district.

Otago had not experienced that diminution of its gold production which had unfortunately befallen the other gold producing Provinces of New Zealand. The increase for the year, small though it be, was the more satisfactory, seeing that a large number of miners had been induced to engage themselves on other works, and seeing that water for sluicing purposes during the past six months had been exceedingly scarce in many districts. He could not over-rate the importance of facilitating as much as possible mutual co-operation of the investing and mining interests. With a view to more complete development of the Goldfields, and the mitigation of grievances to which the mining community were at present subjected, a new Gold Fields Bill had been very carefully prepared, which, it was hoped, would become law next session of the General Assembly. In regard to the bonus for the establishment of a paper factory, a bond had been entered into which, in due time, will result in a paper mill on the banks of the Mataura.

From a statement furnished by the Inspector of Schools, at least £27,000 was required to provide adequate school accommodation, an amount which, in addition to the annual educational charges, involved a much larger drain upon the ordinary revenue of the Province than was either called for or warranted. There seemed to exist a good deal of dissatisfaction with regard to the Dunedin Boys' High School. What was required was an adequate number of scholars to attend the school, and he did not think that any change of management would effect this. A Commission had been appointed to enquire into the subject.

He submitted a scheme providing for the construction of links on the Otago railways by the sale of lands, and which he felt assured, if left to the Colonial Government, would not be done for years, and by which the Province would secure an unbroken line of rail from Waitaki to the Bluff and Lake Wakatipu, enabling agriculturalists to compete in the markets of the world by means of speedy and cheap transit to the port of transit, and saving a large proportion of the annual expenditure upon metalled roads. It was intended this year very considerably to increase the appropriation towards the main road to the Lakes both by way of Naseby and Roxburgh.

The estimated revenue for the current year would enable a larger amount of public works to be undertaken throughout the interior of the Province than had been the case for several years past. Local Road Boards during the past year had been subsidised to the extent of £2 to £1. Should the General Assembly continue its Road Board subsidy, the same rate would, it was anticipated, be maintained during the current year also. In any case, it was proposed to subsidise out of Provincial revenue to the extent of pound for pound. It was proposed to subsidise local contributions on gold fields to the same extent as District Road Board rates and Provincial revenue.

The Colonial Legislature had authorised a special loan of £70,000 for certain public works in the north of the Province. Of this £24,000 was being expended on the breakwater at Oamaru, which promises to be a great success. A further sum of £25,000 was to be expended on a tramway from the main line up the valley of the Waitaki.

The sum of £13,000 was available for roads and bridges, upon which it was being expended. A tender had just been accepted for the erection of stone bridges across the Otepopo River and the Island Stream. The remainder of the loan was to be devoted to harbor work at Kakanui and Moeraki.

Papers would be laid before the Council relative to the defence of Otago against external aggression. A contract had been entered into on behalf of the Province for the resumption of Messrs. P. Henderson and Co.'s line of emigrant ships from Glasgow to Otago direct, and Mr Auld had been urged as to the expediency of conducting emigration by teamers direct to this port.

An important proposal to be made was the removal from the present Lunatic Asylum of all incurable able-bodied patients of which there were now upwards of 40, to a farm in the country, making their labor available for their own sustenance, the support of the Asylum in Dunedin, and with advantage to their individual comfort.

A proposal would be submitted to throw open the Dunedin Hospital to the medical practitioners in the city. Should the University Council establish a School of Medicine and Surgery, he agreed to the further endowment of 100,000 acres of land; it might be well to arrange that the Hospital should be connected with that school under the direction of the medical and surgical professors. He was also disposed to think that the Lunatic Asylum should be under the direction of the Professor of Mental Science in the University.

If money could be raised, the establishment of a Harbor Trust would be a step in the right direction. The work of deepening the approaches to Dunedin wharf was being vigorously prosecuted, and in the course of a month vessels drawing twelve feet could be berthed and swung at Rattray street pier.

The practical removal of the administration of the Waste Lands Act from the control of the Executive Government, and the vesting thereof in an irresponsible Board, he regarded as the weak point in the Act—one which was very likely seriously to prejudice the public interest. Although it might be amended in the House of Representatives, there was little or no hope of such amendment being agreed to by the Legislative Council.

The Council's approval would be solicited to blocks of land being open for selection on deferred payments, to the extent of 30,000 acres, the maximum area allowed by law to be so dealt with this year. This limitation precluded the setting aside of areas on similar terms in other districts. The extensive depasturing district of Wakatipu had not been so satisfactorily administered as could be desired, and a local Commission had been appointed to enquire and report on the subject.

It would be a question as to land of superior quality, the value of which would be greatly enhanced as the country became opened up by the extension of railways, how far it might not be expedient to increase the price. In Canterbury, in which agricultural settlement was being greatly extended, the price had never been under £2 an acre.

On Wednesday, the most recently-elected member, Mr H. S. Fish, jun., moved the Reply to His Honor the Superintendent's Address, and as soon as he had resumed his seat, Mr Reid moved the following amendment:—"That this Council is of opinion that the appointment of the gentlemen at present occupying the Government benches, and their retention of office, is in direct opposition to the system of responsible Government sanctioned by the Council, and this Council hereby records its protest against any Government being appointed or holding office under such circumstances."

The debate was resumed on Thursday.

[The Debate ended on Thursday night by the Government resigning. A division taken on a motion for adjournment showed that Mr Reid had 25 supporters to the Government's 13.]

## HISTORY OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

BY THE ABBE J. E. DARRAS,

(Translated from the original French for the New Zealand TABLET.)

## II.—THE WORLD BEFORE JESUS CHRIST.

THE wisdom of the philosophers would never, in all probability, have arisen out of chaos but for the marvellous reaction wrought by Socrates and his disciple Plato (470-400). These two master minds appear for the first time in the schools about the period of the dispersion of the Jewish people under the Alcmæonidae. Yet, the doctrines of Socrates or divine unity, providence, and the immortality of the soul, notwithstanding their incontestable sublimity and their approximation in many points to the Mosaic revelation, present rather faint outlines and, as it were, flashes of truth, than a well-defined, methodical, compact whole. "We must necessarily," said Socrates, "await the coming of an unknown doctor, who will teach us what ought to be our sentiments towards the Gods and towards our fellow-men." "When may we expect this Master?" replied Alcibiades; "with what joy shall I not hail his coming, whoever he may be." The glory of Socrates as a philosopher consists precisely in his having proclaimed the utter impotence of human philosophy. From his knowledge of man in his double nature—corporal and spiritual—he was enabled to take a lucid view of all the laws of ethics, and to expound them with admirable clearness and precision. Casting his inward glance beyond the exterior phenomena of nature, he catches a glimpse of the Divine Intelligence which presides over the destinies of the world. But, arrived at this point, he is forced to appeal to an unknown teacher, more than man, to dispel the clouds which human reason, left to its own impotence, cannot penetrate. To the shame of paganism be it said, that the only one of its philosophers who attained to such sublime elevation of thought was precisely the one against whom the darts of envy and hatred were most fiercely levelled. The sceptics were honored with laurel crowns—to Socrates was awarded the cup of hemlock. His disciple, Plato (429-347), drew up in a doctrinal form, under the title of 'The Academic School,' the oral teachings of his master. Plato's philosophy is eminently spiritual. His doctrine of ideas is one of the most prominent parts of his system. Ideas, as alone having the essence, are the types of all created things. The senses lay hold of existing things in part or singly, while ideas reside in God, who is their common substance, and can only be reached by pure thinking. The soul is an operative power; virtue, a struggle towards the ideal good, which is God; art, an imitation of the beau-ideal, which means God. Truly these are great and noble doctrines. Their sublimity is an open protest against polytheistic degradation. Yet, how woefully they fall short in the application! By the side of these luminous theories, the practice of the philosopher remains enveloped in the thickest shades of night. He establishes his ideal republic not alone on polygamy, but on promiscuous intercourse, thus suppressing family, paternal authority, and filial piety. He will have children brought up by the State, without even knowing their parents; he pens up his imaginary society into castes, as in Egypt of