

THE 'Lyttelton Times,' in speaking editorially on the scarcity of labor, remarks that for a long time past the mining interest at the Thames has been unfortunately in a declining condition, and says:—At the present moment we believe the prospects of the district are so discouraging that a considerable number of first-class working men might be induced to come down to Canterbury if any one took the trouble to send for them.

A PRIVATE letter from an officer of H.M.S. Pearl, now at Levuka, gives as an *ou dit* that New Zealand will in future be the head-quarters of the squadron instead of Sydney.

THE controversy raised by Dr Laing, who charged early Protestant missionaries in the colony with land-grabbing, is still being fought.

WE learn from the 'North Otago Times' that the Cave Valley estate has changed hands, the purchaser being Mr Cyril Hamden. The price has not transpired authoritatively, but common report states it is to be £28,000.

The 'Wanganui Chronicle,' referring to the "large areas of confiscated land lying north of the Waingongoro river," says:—"The Natives practically refuse to accept the fact that the land has been confiscated, and by tacit consent it is understood that the Queen's writ does not run north of the Waingongoro."

THE Railway Compensation Court is sitting in New Plymouth. The cost of taking the railway through the town, for compensation alone, will amount to £15,000.

NEXT month will behold a considerable reduction in the rates of postage between New Zealand and the various other Australasian colonies. At the Intercolonial Conference, it was agreed to reduce the rate after the close of this year, from 3d to 2d per half-ounce. After this month there will thus be all over these colonies one uniform inland and intercolonial rate of postage, and no inconvenience will arise from differential rates.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are being raised throughout Hawkes Bay to defray the expenses of the defendants in the recent trial for libel against the 'Daily Telegraph.'

CONCERNING the recently discovered seam of coal at Deadman's creek, near Westport, the 'Times' says:—"Latest news says the seam has been opened up on the face to twenty-five feet, and the men now driving in find the coal getting more solid every foot they go."

THE following is an interesting item in connection with the establishment of sugar manufactories and refineries:—No less than 2091 tons of sugar were imported into this colony during the quarter ended 30th September last. This is equal to 62lb. per annum for every man, woman, and child in New Zealand.

A PUBLIC Crushing Company has been formed at Resfont, with a capital of £10,000, in 20,000 shares of 10s each. 30,000 shares were applied for in 24 hours. Splendid stone has been struck in the Golden Ledge claim. The shares advanced 100 per cent. in two hours. The claims have greatly increased in value since the formation of the Crushing Company.

THE practice of running trains to and from Port Chalmers on Sundays, and the alleged evils arising therefrom, have been brought prominently under the notice of his Honor the Superintendent, by a deputation from the Presbyterian Church. Among the reasons urged for discontinuing the Sunday traffic are these:—That the officials on the railway are prevented from participating in Sabbath observances; that temptation is held out to persons, and particularly the young to absent themselves from religious instruction; that such traffic encourages other traffic; that the practice is generally condemned, and especially so by the people of Port Chalmers, where the Sabbath usually presents the appearance of a holiday. His Honor promised to lay the matter before the Government.

WE ('Western Star') are informed, on reliable authority, that the sawmillers will shortly raise the price of timber. The reasons for this step are the great demand, the scarcity of labor, and a very natural desire on the part of the sawmillers to make hay while the sun shines.

EMPTY PRETENTIOUSNESS.—The Wellington correspondent of the 'Otago Guardian,' tells the following unvarnished tale:—The annual distribution of prizes to the Wellington College came off with the usual surroundings, but was rendered noteworthy by a very able report on the state of the college by the Rev. W. B. Harvey, M. A., a gentleman of considerable scholastic ability, and who had been specially appointed by the governors to examine the college and report thereon. It is remarkable from the close similarity to the report of Professor Sale on the High School, the lower forms being well up in their work, but in the upper forms only empty pretentiousness.

THE Russell correspondent of the 'Southern Cross' writes:—"On Sunday morning last Bishop Croke, D.D., held a service in the Roman Catholic Chapel, and afterwards delivered a most eloquent and impressive address to a numerous congregation, three-fourths of whom belonged to the English Church denomination. It is seldom we have the pleasure and edification of listening to a preacher of Bishop Croke's religious attainments."

AT Tauranga the Government have purchased a block of land measuring 150,000 acres.

THE Wanganui took fire at the Bluff Wharf on Friday night last. The fire was extinguished without serious damage.

THE Dunedin bakers have raised the price of the 4lb loaf to 8d. THE body of a man, supposed to be that of Beamish, who was drowned in Dunedin Bay, has been discovered near Burn's old building, on the Peninsula. The body was much disfigured.

At the last meeting of the City Council, a letter was read from the Postmaster-General, pointing out the necessity that existed for the establishment of a post-office, in connection with a savings bank and telegraph office, at the north end of the city, and intimating that the Government would be prepared to build the same if the City Council would grant a site. The matter was referred to a committee, and there it is said, no doubt that the site will be granted.

THE 'Mount Ida Chronicle' remarks that the miners' associations throughout the province seem pretty well determined to try their strength on the question of the combined reduction in the price of gold made by the banks:

THE Kennedy family (the celebrated Scottish vocalists) have arrived from Melbourne.

MESSES Hallenstein and Co. have started their New Zealand Clothing Factory at Dunedin, on a temporary footing, and purpose soon employing 300 or 400 hands—chiefly girls.

A FIRE of a suspicious nature was discovered a few days ago, at the Prince of Wales Hotel, Princes street south. It was soon put out.

THE adjourned meeting of the Dunedin Licensing Bench did not take place, the Justices, who were not present, it appeared, from what was stated, considering they had no power to sit.

THE Province of Hawke's Bay expects to commence its next financial year with a credit balance of over £60,000.

ANOTHER schoolmaster has been fined for beating a girl. The delinquent in this case was Stephen Carriok, of the school at Porirua, Wellington.

THE 'Arrow Observer' takes a gloomy view of the state of the gold-mining industry in New Zealand generally, and in the Wakatipu district in particular.

THE Southland wool season is advancing rapidly, and wool waggons are now arriving at Invercargill almost daily. Pasturage has been plentiful this season, and consequently the clip is a good one.

AT Waimate, in Canterbury, 75 acres of Government bush realised £29 4s 9d per acre.

A NUMBER of Chinamen passed through Riverton lately, en route to Orepuki.

AT German bay, Akaroa, a swarm of bees took up their abode in a post office letter box, and were dislodged with some trouble.

MR O'Toole of Addison's Flat has taken his departure for Sydney. THE prospects of the Nevis never looked better than they do at present.

THE Auckland cricketers met with an enthusiastic reception on their return. They were played through the city by the band, and have since been entertained at a public dinner.

SHAW, Saville and Co. are making from £200,000 to £250,000 a year out of the New Zealand trade.

MESSES BROGDEN lately imported fifty tons of wrought iron, and three locomotives.

AUCKLAND is monopolising the Fiji trade to the exclusion of Sydney.

THE Shotover River rises from six to nine inches in a day, and falls to the same extent at night. This is due to the melting of snow deposits.

A LATE visitor to Taranaki reports that the people of that province import almost every commodity, owing to the fact that they do not grow or manufacture articles for themselves.

MR HOMER has made good progress with the Martin's-Bay Track.

A TATTERSALL'S Club, for regulating betting, is being formed in Auckland.

A FIRE curing establishment has been opened at Waikouaiti.

SEVERAL parties of miners are doing very well at Cardrona.

THE oat crop in Canterbury is expected to be very heavy.

THE 'Waikato Times' advocates establishing an asylum for inebriates.

THE 'Taranaki News' calls the 'Otago Guardian' "Our Antarctic Contemporary."

THE Greymouth Licensed Victuallers' Association is being wound up.

THE business in the Telegraph Department is still increasing.

THE Taranaki honey harvest is expected to be unusually good this year.

COAL from the newly opened seams at Mokihini has been tried in Westport with most excellent results.

"MAJOR" FINNIMORE, of Wanganui, is about to proceed to Britain.

TARANAKI has an Inspector of Thistles, who has to see that thistles are kept down.

A LOT of lucky Chinese diggers left Hokitika lately for Melbourne, en route for the land of their nativity.

SETTLEMENT goes on apace in the Upper Taieri district.

THE library of the Wellington Athenaeum contains 4200 books.

AN Invercargill paper mentions that the scarcity of labor continues to be much felt.

ACCOUNTS from the Inangahua are satisfactory. Long and weary depression is likely to give place to briskness and speculation.

MAJOR GORDON, the Inspector of volunteers, denies the report that he said the Wellington Artillery was the best corps he had seen in the colony.

IN the Christchurch museum are two whale skeletons, both of full-grown animals. One is seven and the other thirty feet long.

FROM Auckland comes news that the Australian Bellringers have been drawing crowded houses.

AT Nelson lately, Mr Abraham Bush, aged 73 years, complained of feeling unwell, undressed, got into bed, and a few minutes afterwards died. Death was occasioned by disease of the heart.

GREAT complaints are being made in Auckland of the ravages committed by sparrows among the fruit.

THE erection of a new export goods shed at the Invercargill railway station has been commenced. The shed is to measure 200 feet by 50 feet.

Among the imports per ship Caller Ou, to Otago, are five cases of silver coin.

THE Mataura Bench of Justices lately fined the landlord of the Pyramid Hotel £2 for permitting drunkenness in his hotel.

THE Wellington shipwrights, who number about thirty, have formed themselves into an Association.

A NEW municipality comprising the three townships of Shortland, Grahamstown, and the Tararua has been constituted on the Thames goldfields.

THE steamer Lady of the Lake, with eighty tons of railway iron on board, has crossed the Taieri bar at quarter-ebb; and steamed up the river to the bridge.