

News of the Week.

FRIDAY.

A REMARKABLY heavy storm of wind and rain occurred at Hokitika on Wednesday, causing a big fresh in the river, and flooding the low-lying parts of the town. The Christchurch coach, due on Wednesday evening, arrived to-night. The vessels in port have been bar-bound since Monday last, through stress of weather.

Mr. Clendon, R.M., at Whangarei, has been fined for having a horse astray in the street, and a J.P. had to be got to sit in judgment on the erring magistrate, who a short time previously had commented severely on this offence when delinquents were brought before him.

The decision of the Otago Land Board yesterday in the Strath-Taieri dummy cases was that the licenses should not be issued and that all improvements and moneys paid should be forfeited.

The evidence taken in the Wairarapa collision inquiry has been forwarded to the Marine Department at Wellington. A further inquiry will be held in Melbourne.

Great interest attaches in Berlin to the warm reception accorded to the Grand Duke Michael and to General Gourka. Russia has joined Prince Bismarck's league.

The South Australian gunboat Protector will make a trial trip in the middle of April, and will sail soon afterwards. Her guns have already been tried, and proved to be excellent.

It is announced that Admiral Miott has been appointed to supercede Admiral Galliber as commander of the French fleet in Malay waters.

The latest intelligence to hand from Tonquin announces that the French commander-in-chief has massed the troops which recently arrived and that an immediate advance will be made upon Bac Ninh with the whole force.

SATURDAY.

The criminal statistics of Auckland district, just published, show that the total number of offences reported in this district last year was 3798, in connection with which 3679 persons were apprehended, and 1294 proceeded against by summons. This shows an increase of 98 in the cases reported, 152 in the persons apprehended, and 193 in the number summoned.

The *Lyttelton Times* of Friday says:—Mr. Smart, the managing director of the Premier Prospecting Company, who, for some three weeks, has been engaged in prospecting in the valley of the Rakata, returned to town yesterday. He reports that the weather during his stay was beautiful until the last two or three days. He found some "boulders" of quartz showing gold, and also came across large deposits of sand in the river bed, precisely similar to that on the Southbridge beach. In addition to these indications of gold, Mr. Smart discovered certain signs of copper, which induced him to come to town, and secure a license to search for this metal over 250 acres of land in the Fighting Hill district.

In the House of Commons on Thursday night Mr. Gladstone introduced a bill for a reform of the franchise. The measure provides for a uniform qualification throughout the three Kingdoms. The Premier announced that a bill for dealing with the re-distribution of seats would be introduced next session.

A bag containing 20lbs. of dynamite, with clockwork machinery, was found on Thursday in the cloak-room at Charing Cross railway-station. An infernal machine was also found at Paddington railway-station. These discoveries indicate that a project is on foot to destroy the London termini, and considerable alarm prevails in the public mind.

A force, under Major-general Graham, has received orders to advance against the enemy, and a forward movement was to be made yesterday. Two battalions of Egyptian troops, under command of British officers, started for Assouan, on the Nubian frontier, at the first cataract of the Nile, with the object of opposing the advance of the rebels in that direction.

MONDAY.

The infernal machines found at the Victoria, Charing Cross, and Paddington railway stations are identical in construction, and are shown to be of American manufacture. It is proved that the clockwork mechanism in the one found at the Paddington station failed to act. Had it acted a serious explosion would have occurred.

The new Electoral Reform Bill will, it is estimated, create 2,000,000 of additional voters, and Mr. Gladstone suggests that additional representation in the shape of a limited increase in the number of members in the House of Commons should be granted. He is not, however, favourable to any reduction in the number of Irish members.

The wool catalogue contains 108,000 bales. Competition is good, but merinos are easy. Crossbreds are firm.

News has been received from Kassala, a town on the River Mareh, near the Abyssinian frontier, which has been in a state of siege for some time past, that the garrison of Egyptian troops recently made a sortie from the place. A strong force of rebels was encountered, and an engagement ensued, which resulted in their defeat with considerable loss. Official telegrams just received give news of the victory of the British troops under Major-general Graham over the rebels near Toaki. The message states that the enemy was attacked in force and a general battle ensued. The fighting was very desperate on both sides, and lasted till nightfall. The British were finally successful at every point, the rebels being driven from all their positions. Our loss is slight, and is set down at 10 killed and 40 wounded. The enemy suffered severely, and are stated to have lost fully a thousand men. General Gordon, as Governor of the Sudan, has issued a proclamation stating that he has summoned the British troops to Khartoum to punish the rebels.

A good deal of excitement was caused over the steamship race between the Adelaide and Wairarapa. The Union boat had the lead at the starting, but the Adelaide came up to her, and the vessels pushed along at a speed of 14 knots an hour. The Adelaide then

came up, and the speed was increased to 16 knots. All was excitement aboard both vessels, and a good deal of alarm was exhibited by the passengers. When the west channel lightship was passed, the Adelaide had been in the proper or eastern channel, and was driving ahead, when the Wairarapa suddenly shifted her course, and by so doing canted her quarter on to the Adelaide's starboard side with such severity that some passengers below were thrown out of their berths, and some of the bulwarks were bent. The position was so critical that the vessel had to go full speed astern, but subsequently again steamed ahead. The Wairarapa stopped, and almost at the same time a thick fog obscured all lights. The Wairarapa sent a boat to the Adelaide to ascertain the extent of damage. It is understood that the Steam Navigation Board will hold an inquiry.

Harvest operations in the Wairarapa district are now almost completed. It is expected that by the end of next week the whole of the crops will be gathered. From all accounts the harvest will be satisfactory to all. The wheat, oats, barley, and potatoes are in splendid condition, the barley being especially good.

It has been stated at the Auckland City Schools Committee that the city schools were now crowded, and hundreds of children rejected. As the Education Board has no funds to build fresh schools, it was suggested to rent buildings.

A novel mode of dealing with the rabbit nuisance has just been adopted by the Parsons Brothers in the Awatere district. Early last Thursday morning, before daylight, when the rabbits were down on the flats feeding, about 1000 yards of string netting was hung loosely on stakes driven into the ground at distances of about a chain apart round Scarborough Hill. Soon after daylight dogs were employed to start the rabbits up towards their burrows, and the efforts of those engaged in the operation were successful beyond anticipation. Started by the dogs, the rabbits made for their holes in large numbers, and rubbing at the loose netting they became entangled in the meshes and were then easily caught. At two o'clock 1700 had been killed, and it was expected that another 500 would be obtained before dark.

Very heavy floods have occurred in Northern Queensland. Over 11in. of rain fell at Townsville in one night. The Endeavour bridge, near Cooktown, was washed away. Great disasters and loss of property have been occasioned amongst the settlers. The bodies of three Chinese were found. A man named Galloway and a Kanaka are missing from the schooner Exchange, which sank. The Burdekin River flooded the Great Northern railway, which was considerably damaged. Floods also occurred at Port Darwin, in the Northern Territory, where a trooper was drowned.

TUESDAY.

The *Southland Times* of yesterday reports that the passengers who left Invercargill by the morning train for Kingston had a novel experience. After passing Parawai, it was thought that there would be no further trouble from the flood, but soon after leaving Athol another break was observed ahead. Speed was accordingly slackened at a point where the water had encroached to within a few feet on each side of the line. Here hundreds of rabbits had collected, and as the engine advanced they took to the middle of the railway and ran before it like a flock of sheep, constantly increasing in numbers as they went. Some of the passengers who had been bewailing their ill luck in having to return to Lumden for the night became excited at the prospect of the sport, and, jumping out of the train, were soon engaged in a regular rabbit *battue*. In some cases walking-sticks were brought into play, in others chunks of coal did equally good execution. How long the slaughter would have continued is hard to say, for the hunters had rabbits to right of them, rabbits to left of them, and rabbits in front of them, all hurrying and scurrying in mortal terror; but just as the train drew up at the enforced stopping-place, the bunnies, unable to go farther ahead, plunged right and left into the water and swam for dear life. The water was thick with them, and the probability is that few of them lived to reach their burrows on the higher country. When the train came along next morning, freshly-skinned carcasses lying about indicated that the rabbiters had been on the scene in the interval, and must have made a rare haul.

Telegrams are to hand from Candia reporting that a religious ferment has commenced amongst the Cretans, who have repudiated the Mussulman governor of the island, and threaten to revolt unless he is removed.

The British Government have sent a communication to the United States Government complaining of the assistance afforded in America to the dynamite plotters in England by the manufacture of infernal machines. Another machine, identical with those already seized, has been found at the Ludgate Hill railway-station.

Telegrams to hand from Souakim state that after the battle on Friday the British troops under Major-general Graham bivouacked at El Teb, and on Saturday advanced to Tokar. Major-general Graham telegraphs that the engagement lasted fully three hours, and that during that time the fighting was most severe. His troops captured several guns and a quantity of war material. The British loss was 30 killed and 142 wounded. Among the latter were Baker Pasha and Colonels Burnaby and Barrow, all of whom suffered severe injuries. The troops under Major-general Graham comprised 3000 infantry, 1000 cavalry, and 300 artillery. The Naval Brigade, with 20 light guns, made the advance in the form of an oblong square upon the enemy's forts, containing two Krupp guns, and began the battle. The number of Arabs was estimated at 10,000, and they made repeated charges in detached bodies, and the marvellous bravery of Ulundi was repeated. The forts were defended with great tenacity, but were finally stormed. The Krupp and Gatling guns created fearful havoc. Finally the Arabs, who had made a stand at El Teb, retired after four hours' fighting, the cavalry pursuing them. Latest reports say that 1500 rebels were killed in the late engagement. The British troops left El Teb on Saturday morning and marched to Tokar, which they occupied during the afternoon without opposition. The Arab rebels who had invested the places withdrew before the British arrived, and offered no check to their advance. Intelligence has been received