

News of the Week.

FRIDAY.

THE Christchurch *Press* says:—An impartial consideration of the whole position leads us to the conclusion that the new Government, although they may secure a majority in the House, cannot be described as the powerful Administration to which the Colony had been looking forward. Assuming that Mr. Richardson's presence in it is only temporary, it is improbable that an equally strong man will be found to fill his place. But even his strength may prove a weakness to the Government when they come to face the House. However much we may regret the fact, it is nevertheless true that provincial considerations have to be regarded in selecting members of a Cabinet; and, as things at present stand, there are three members of it from Canterbury, while five out of the seven are Middle Island representatives. It is not certain that the new Government will meet with the unanimous support of the representatives from Otago and Canterbury; while it is more than probable that they may before long find arrayed against them a solid vote of the North Island and of the representatives from the West Coast and the Cook Strait settlements. Still, in present circumstances, very likely, no attempt will be made to displace them now, the disposition of members on the other side, probably, being to give them a chance to show what they can do for the Colony.

Our Tapanui contemporary gives the following details:—Our townsman, Mr. C. Pacey, of the Farmers' Club Hotel, received a severe concussion of the head, with great abrasion of the face, from the effect of sneezing while standing at his hotel door recently. After partially recovering he immediately started to drive a gentleman to Rae's Junction—a distance of 18 miles—on a bitter cold day, and was just enabled to reach his home when he became insensible, very dangerous symptoms occurring. Dr. Jones was sent for, and by unremitting attention he is now recovering, though unable to leave his apartment.

In dealing with some bankruptcy cases in Chambers at Auckland, yesterday morning, Judge Gillies expressed an opinion that, in estates where the assets were trifling, the debtors' solicitors should not be allowed full costs. The estate under his notice at the time could not pay a half-penny in the pound. To grant the debtor's solicitor full costs would be to sweep away more than one-third of the assets. Under the circumstances he thought five guineas quite sufficient.

The House of Representatives assembled at 2 p.m. yesterday. The Speaker read a message from the Governor stating that it was inconvenient for him to attend and give his reasons for calling Parliament together, but that he would do so on Tuesday. The Hon. Major Atkinson moved the adjournment till Tuesday at 2 p.m. This was carried, and the House rose at 2.15 p.m.

At a time (says the *Daily Times*) when the situation of the Ministry is critical, the Premier, instead of consolidating his followers, is looking after his private business in Dunedin. How Sir J. Vogel allowed Mr. Stout to commit this folly we cannot conceive. Can we wonder that members who are kept kicking their heels about the lobbies are angry that their return to their private business is delayed by the private business of the Premier? We do not want to make a mountain out of a molehill, but it is altogether an unparalleled occurrence in politics for the private carriage of the Premier to stop the road of public affairs, and it is an occurrence of which members and the country alike have good reason to complain. What is more, it is likely to do the Ministry harm. Sir J. Vogel cannot afford to continue making mistakes such as these, or allowing other people to make them. Attention to Parliamentary tactics is absolutely necessary to the life of a Ministry the existence of which is so precarious, and we trust that he will take a friendly hint before it is too late. A great intellect and grand policy are no doubt far more important but to neglect details is always to pave the way down hill.

The Arrowtown correspondent of the *Cromwell Argus* writes as follows:—"Frequent complaints are heard just now about the risk persons incur owing to the dangerous state of the foot-track leading from Cooper's terrace to the foot-bridge on the Macetown road. The fact of so many accidents having occurred in that locality during the past fortnight alone is ample proof of how well-founded are these complaints. Although, fortunately, none of the accidents that have happened, so far, have proved fatal, the escapes were so narrow in many instances that it cannot be surprising that people are not inclined to go along the track in question oftener than their circumstances require. Only last week a man named Edward Power fell a distance of thirty feet on to the river beach. Although he miraculously escaped being killed outright by the fall, he would in all likelihood have been drowned in the river if he had rolled a foot or two further, for he was unconscious when his mate found him. He was taken to the hospital as soon as possible. In a few days he was sufficiently recovered to be able to return home.

The evil results of the resignation of the Atkinson Ministry (says the *Timaru Herald*) on the first day of the session are now only too glaringly apparent. Sir Julius Vogel, instead of being the leader of a powerful party, has been made the victim of an intrigue, and a Ministry has been formed by that means which cannot be said to represent in any respect the feeling of the country as expressed in the late general election. We have practically the Grey Ministry with Sir Julius Vogel in a minor capacity, instead of Sir George Grey at the head. Now, if there is one thing more than another which the people declared by their votes at the election, it was that they had no sympathy with Sir George Grey or with the principles advocated by the party he was supposed to represent. . . . What was wanted undoubtedly was a strong Ministry, and we cannot believe that a Ministry thus constituted and thus brought into power can be strong. That there are strong men and very able men in it is beyond dispute. Mr. Stout is one of the strongest and ablest public men in the country, and Sir Julius Vogel is another. Mr. Ballance has not shown nearly the same strong qualities that Sir Julius Vogel or Mr.

Stout has, but he is unquestionably a man of promise, and is fully entitled to a place in the Ministry. The same may be said of Mr. Richardson. With all this the individual Minister's strength seems to us to be nullified by their relation to one another. Sir Julius Vogel's prestige is gone through his abandonment of the position to Mr. Stout, and Mr. Stout's and Mr. Ballance's strength as Radical politicians cannot but be much impaired by their taking office with Sir Julius Vogel. Under existing circumstances it is an ugly affair altogether.

Earl Lauderdale, who was struck by lightning on Tuesday in Scotland, died on Wednesday from the injuries he received. His Lordship was aged 62.

Sir John Gorrie denies that the Fijians have been reduced to slavery. He defends the policy of Sir Arthur Gordon.

Sir Evelyn Wood, who is to command the expedition to Khar-toum in October, has started for Assouan to make the necessary arrangements.

It has been ascertained that anti-French mandarins poisoned the late King of Anam.

The cholera epidemic continues with varying intensity in France and Italy. No further outbreak of a serious nature has occurred, however.

The Congress at Versailles continued its sittings on Wednesday, when a motion in favour of the revision of the French Constitution was adopted by a large majority.

Two battalions of British infantry now stationed in India have been ordered to proceed to Egypt without delay.

Intelligence is to hand that the Chinese Government has sent a communication to the Treaty Powers protesting against the bombardment of Kelung by the French fleet, and has expressed its determination to resist the demand of France for an indemnity.

SATURDAY.

The women's petition to Parliament for female suffrage under the licensing law has been signed at Auckland by 1700 persons.

The *Southland News* has the following paragraph: "From inquiries made at the Hospital it was ascertained that the smallpox patient is progressing favourably—in fact, the child is almost well. The mother, so far, has not caught the infection. During the next day or two it will be known if any other cases will occur from the same source. A private letter has been received here from Balclutha to the effect that some cases of the disease have occurred there, it being understood that the parties were fellow passengers of Mrs. Hanning and child."

The Wellington correspondent of the *Daily Times* wires as follows:—"A few of Major Atkinson's supporters met at his house to-day to talk over the position, and it is stated that a resolution was come to to propose an amendment on the Address-in-Reply. In regard to the probable numbers on a want of confidence motion it is curious to note that each party claims exactly 51 votes, "excluding doubtfuls." This is remarkable as a coincidence, but is a little perplexing from the fact that this makes the House to consist of 102 members, exclusive of the dubious ones, whereas the official list only gives 95, inclusive of Mr. Speaker. There seems, however, a very general impression that if the Ministry does succeed in retaining office it will only be after a very tough struggle.

The *Ross Mercury* (says the *Grey Argus*) is to be commended for doing its best to counteract the effects of misleading information in regard to Cedar Creek Reefs. That journal takes exception to the nature of the telegrams sent by the *Ross Press* agent throughout the Colony, and instances the following, which has appeared in all the principal papers of the Colony as a sample:—"Two men have just brought eight pieces of gold picked from a newly-discovered outcrop on [the line of the Cedar Creek quartz reefs. The heaviest piece weighs 3d wts. The party have taken up a lease, and the ground all round is being rushed." Our contemporary says that the statement is entirely misleading, the person who sent it a "drivelling idiot," and that there is not a particle of truth in any of the reports sent away by him. "Drivelling idiots" are scarcely the class of agents the Press Association should select.

Information has reached Wanganui that Thorpe's survey party, at present in charge of Pemberton, have been turned back by an armed party of Natives, who are said to have threatened them if they proceeded further with the survey.

We yesterday (says the *Wellington Post*) described an amusing double blunder which occurred in the transmission of a telegram. Particulars of another and even more amusing blunder in the same department have come to hand this morning in connection with the rumoured case of smallpox at the Hutt. It appears that when the report reached the police, Sergeant Anderson at once wired to the constable at the Hutt as follows:—"John Adams said to be ill with smallpox at Hutt. Ascertain cautiously if true. He was a passenger by Waihora, and had charge of the infected lamp-trimmer's dog." Considering that Mr. Adams is a gentleman of good position, and was a saloon passenger by the Waihora, the idea of his having had charge of Mounatt's dog is sufficiently funny, but the cream of the joke is to come. On the message being received at the Hutt Telegraph Office it was placed in an envelope addressed to Constable Mackay, which was then enclosed in a wrapper addressed by mistake to "John Adams, Esq." The boy to whom it was entrusted for delivery took it to the wrapper address, and the telegram was opened by Mrs. Adams in her husband's absence. The contents, as may be imagined, considerably mystified her. When Mr. Adams came home the joke was completed by his taking the telegram to the constable for whom it was intended, and particularly enjoining him not to neglect his instructions to make his enquiries "cautiously."

Reports having been published that the doctor in charge of the quarantine-station at Napier had been negligent in his duties to the smallpox patient Mowatt, who died on Wednesday night, the Colonial Secretary wired to the Mayor of Napier, and the following reply was received:—"Have had daily written report from doctor at quarantine-station, and he has been seen every day by orderlies; also visited at certain hours both day and night. I can positively contradict the rumour."