

# News of the Week.

FRIDAY.

In the House of Representatives yesterday, replying to Mr. Pearson, the Hon. Mr. Stout said Government would be quite willing to appoint an unpaid commissioner to inquire into the individual cases of the unemployed. To enable him to speak to the question, Mr. Seddon moved the adjournment. He maintained that an unpaid commissioner would not meet the requirements of the case. It would be only wealthy men who could afford to do the work for nothing, and the result would be that great injustice would be done. Mr. O'Callaghan said there could be no doubt but that great hardships were being endured. The wages offered by Government—4s 6d per day—was not sufficient for the exigencies of the case. The Hon. Mr. Stout said that Government would do its best to meet the requirements of the case. If a paid commissioner was necessary, then that would be done. The men who refused 4s 6d per day had been offered piecework, and some of those who accepted made as much as 10s per day. It was only the useless class of men who were complaining.—On the motion of Mr. Brown the Gold Duties Abolition Bill was reported, read a third time and passed.—Sir George Grey moved the second reading of the Parliamentary Under-secretary of State Bill. The object of this measure was to provide a Parliamentary under-secretary who, unlike that of the Old Country, was to be unfettered by the permanent under-secretary. The permanent under-secretary should simply occupy the position of a head clerk. The proposal would have the effect of training a class of men in the duties of affairs of the State in a manner in which they could not be otherwise educated. By that means they would bring a knowledge of affairs of the country to bear upon their deliberations which would be of great service to Parliament. Again, the Civil Service was becoming an isolated class, and to a great extent an irresponsible class. The Parliamentary under-secretary would be a man coming from the ranks of the people, and as such he would feel the responsibility of office; as well as the responsibility he held to the public. Question put that the bill be now read a second time—*ayes*, 25; *noes*, 33.

The Cambridge railway was formally opened on Tuesday.

Very favourable accounts have come to hand from the Southern Cross Petroleum Company, Gisborne. No. 3 bore is down 180ft., and is now passing through a hard, close-grained flagstone, said to be usually found above and between oil-sands. It is a slightly porous, permitting gas and a small quantity of oil to rise.

Fathers Ahern and Sauzeau, while returning from Wallingford to Waipawa on Wednesday, were thrown out of a trap through the horse shying. Father Ahern was bruised, and Father Sauzeau's leg was broken.

It seems to me (Wellington correspondent of the *Lyttelton Times*) that the session will last a good deal longer than appeared likely a few days back. Many members are becoming anxious to get back to their business and their homes, but much still requires to be done here, and it looks more than likely that they will perforce have to remain into November to clear off everything comfortably and properly. Government are partly responsible for this, showing none of that indecent haste, as it has been called, to force through estimates and their own measures, to which ere now we have been accustomed.

The *Times* announces that the Imperial Cabinet has definitely decided to adopt stringent measures to put a stop to the encroachments on territory in Bechuanaland by the Boers, and to prevent the continuance of the present lawless treatment of the natives in that district.

Further fighting has taken place in Tonquin, and the French have everywhere proved victorious. They are now advancing on the Chinese position on the frontier.

A Hamburg firm has contracted to supply the German Navy with coal at New Britain and the Marshall Islands.

The *Standard* publishes the following as the Government scheme of redistribution:—The bill assigns to English counties 231 members, boroughs 229 members. Wales: Counties 18 members, boroughs 12 members. Scotland: Counties 36 members, boroughs 32. Irish Counties, two members for each, and all boroughs whose populations are under 10,000 will be merged into the counties. The city of London will be represented by one member to every 80,000 inhabitants.

A camel corps, composed of Canadians, have started up the Nile for Khartoum. Several Arab sheiks between Shendi and Khartoum have arrived at Ambukal, on the Nile, and tendered their submission to the commander of the British force stationed there. Osman Digna has retired from Sonakin and abandoned his attack upon the town. The neighbourhood is now free from hostile Arabs. News, however, has been received from the inland districts of Northern Nubia, stating that Osman Digna is now harassing the friendly tribes, and has massacred a large number of women and children belonging to them.

One of the chief events of the week in Dunedin took place yesterday, when the marriage of Mr. King, of Tapanui, to Miss Hill, eldest daughter of Mr. Charles Hill, of the Kaikorai Valley, was solemnised in St. Joseph's Church, His Lordship the Bishop, assisted by the Rev. Father Purton, O.S.B., officiating, and afterwards acting as celebrant of the nuptial Mass.—The bride, who had for some years taken a leading part in the choir of the church, was given away by her uncle, Mr. Edward Carroll, of Mornington, and was attended by three bridesmaids,—the Misses Mary Hill, Martin, and Nettleton, and three tiny train-bearers—the Misses Fagan (2) and Purton, her dresses being a magnificent *crème marveux* trimmed with satin and broché, and those of the bridesmaids, *crème* and pale blue satin. At the conclusion of the ceremony which exclusive of the wedding guests, had attracted a large number of people to the church, Mr. C. Waud, the late organist, played Mendelssohn's "Wedding March."

SATURDAY.

In the House of Representatives yesterday, replying to Mr. Dargaville, the Hon. R. Stout said Government would consider

during the recess the defence of the principal seaport towns in the Colony; but they would not pledge themselves as to what further action might be taken.—The Hon. Sir J. Vogel moved the second reading of the West Coast (Middle Island) and Nelson Railway Bills. In support of the motion he urged the vast extent of mineral resources with which the districts in question abounded. These were to a great extent left dormant in consequence of the great difficulty and expense incurred by parties prospecting the country. The prices of rations alone were far in excess of those paid in any other district in the Colony, and on that account alone the land was, practically speaking, locked up. With railway communication this dearth would be greatly alleviated, and the resources of the place have a fair chance of development. In years past the West Coast of this Island had been more an appendage of Australia than it was of this Colony. Railway communication would obviate that difficulty, and place it in its proper position in relation to the rest of the Colony. It had been alleged that this measure was part of the borrowing scheme of the Government. That, however, he believed, upon more careful consideration they would see was not the case. The bill, as they knew it, simply provided for a company taking up this work. The debate was adjourned to Monday.

The *Tapanui Courier* reports something new in the hunting line: A great treat is in store for the sporting people of this district on Saturday afternoon, when the hounds will be thrown off immediately after the close of the Farmers' Club meeting, at 4 p.m. Mr. J. Taggart will arrive with the hounds to-morrow, and should sufficient inducement offer, a second run will take place on Monday. The red coats intend to turn out in full force, and we understand that several of the fair sex mean to be "in the hunt." The meeting will take place on the racecourse, and the admission to the course will be 1s, to defray expenses. The drag-line over which the hunt will take place will be in view of the grand stand.

At the meeting of the Auckland Chamber of Commerce the following proceedings took place in relation to the Parliamentary Committee's report on the North Island Trunk Railway:—Mr. Bree said what in his opinion they should go in for now was a branch line to Taranaki. Mr. McMillan said they should stand out for the line *via* Stratford, and fight it out; and instruct their members that it was essential to their city and their trade that that should be the line adopted. Mr. Vaile moved that the Chamber should promote a large public mass meeting, and put on a determined face against this central route. He would be in favour of doing without the railway rather than have this route, for he was convinced they would be better without any railway at all than this central railway. Auckland should have a say in the selection of the route, and they should set their faces against the Southern members deciding for them in favour of the central line. Mr. L. D. Nathan quite concurred with Mr. Vaile. The late Ministry, he reminded them, had always promised to support the line to Stratford, and let Auckland members now back them up in the position that what they would have was this or nothing. Mr. McMillan reminded them that the votes of Auckland members had prevented this route being adopted. After some further discussion the resolution to call a public meeting was adopted.

Intelligence has been received from Pitcairn Island that Elizabeth Young, the last of the first generation, died recently, aged 95 years. She was the third child born on the island, and was the daughter of Mills, the gunner's mate of the *Bounty*.

Another smart shock of earthquake was experienced yesterday at Christchurch.

A young man named Edward Organ was missed at Oamaru, about a week ago, and it was surmised that he had fallen into the creek that runs through the town. This surmise turned out to be correct, for his body was found in the creek on Thursday night. An inquest was held, when a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

A man named William McCracken was found dead in his hut at Forest Hill, near Winton, on Thursday night. He had been dead apparently some days. No foul play is suspected, but an inquest will probably be held.

Another fire occurred in Dee Street, Invercargill, yesterday morning. The alarm was given at 5.15 a.m., when the shop of Mr. W. Brown, draper, was observed to be on fire. The Brigade were early in attendance, but this part of the block consisted of six wooden tenements, and nothing could be done with the appliances in use to save them. The flames spread rapidly, and only stopped in their progress when the corner of the block was reached. The following buildings were destroyed:—W. Brown, draper; Moody, fishmonger; Steans, hairdresser; Crawford, boarding-house; Riordan, fruiterer; and Tomlinson, saddler. The brick warehouse of Sargood, Son, and Ewen, to the rear of the wooden houses, was in danger for a time, but was saved through the pulling down of the intermediate structures. No stock was saved from Brown's, but a good deal was saved from the other places. The shop in which the fire broke out was next to the brick premises destroyed some months ago, and now being rebuilt. In addition to the buildings named, the branch shop of H. August was also destroyed. The following are the insurances:—Brown and Colonial, £100 in the Liverpool and London and Globe, £100 in the Royal, and £100 in the Victoria; Brown's stock £150 in the South British and 100 in the Hansatic. There was nothing on Moody's stock. Steans' and Crawford's buildings (owned by C. Freeman), £400 in the Liverpool and London and Globe; Steans' stock, £100 in the Colonial; Crawford's furniture, £100 in the Hansatic, and £120 in the Liverpool and London and Globe; Riordan's and Tomlinson's buildings, £250 in the Australian Mercantile Union (£150 of which is reinsured), and Equitable, £200; Riordan's stock, £50 in the Hansatic; Tomlinson's stock, £200 in the Australian Mercantile Union, and £200 in the Fire Insurance Association; H. August's buildings, £100 in the North British, and his furniture £50 in the Standard and £50 in the Union. The total insurances amount to £2570. Additional insurances: Steans' stock, £150 in the London and Lancashire; August's building, £200 in the same office.