

News of the Week.

FRIDAY.

In the House of Representatives yesterday, the Hon. R. Stout said that since the House rose that morning the Government had considered the position in which they were put by the Committee of Ways and Means. They had consulted with their supporters, and had come to the conclusion not to ask the House to again go into committee on the tariff resolution. They would ask the House to validate the resolution already passed by the committee, and by leave of the House would move a resolution to that effect. He need hardly state that the loss to the revenue by the action of the committee would be £70,000. The Government proposed to meet the loss by renewing for two years the £50,000 deficiency bills of 1883-4; and as to the other £20,000, it was proposed that the expense of the constabulary engaged in defence works should be charged on loan. This would reconp the loss of £70,000 from duties. As to the measures the Government intended to proceed with, he said that it was proposed to go on with the Local Finance and Powers Bill, which they considered a Ministerial bill in the strict sense of the term. They proposed to withdraw from the bill the proposal for borrowing on subsidies, and they would not ask the House to fix any time for giving subsidies to local bodies. He said he regretted that the House had not granted additional supplies as asked for. Under the tariff the duties would press fairly on all classes, and provided at the same time that local industries were not interfered with. In order that no injury should be done to the mercantile community, he asked leave to move a resolution which rescinded the Customs duties resolution of June 29, except so far as related to spirits, bitters, wines, sparkling wines, and Australian wines. The resolution was put and carried on the voices.—Mr. Hobbs moved the second reading of "The Gaming and Lotteries Act 1881" Amendment (No. 1) Bill. He said the bill was fully discussed last session, and passed its second reading. It would no doubt have become law but for the lateness of the session. He said that the bill did not interfere with the other bill introduced under the same title. It was simply intended to prohibit racing consultations. The motion was carried on the voices.—The Hon. J. A. Tole moved the second reading of the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act 1867 Amendment Bill. Agreed to.—The Hon. R. Stout moved the second reading of the Industrial Schools Act Amendment Bill. He explained that the bill provided that men who were perfectly competent to provide for the maintenance of their children in the industrial schools should be compelled to do so. Agreed to.—The Hon. R. Stout moved the second reading of the Municipal Corporations Bill, explaining that it was merely a consolidation bill which had already passed the other Chamber. Agreed to.—The Hon. W. J. M. Larnach moved the second reading of "The Mines Act 1877" Amendment Bill. He said the object of the bill was to amend the Mines Act of 1877 in several particulars. Agreed to.—The Hon. J. Ballance moved the second reading of "The West Coast Settlement Reserves Act 1881" Amendment Bill. He said the passing of the bill would greatly facilitate the settlement of the land on the West Coast. Agreed to.

At the Wyndham Grain and Root show on Wednesday two chains length of drills of sweds and common turnips were shown by Mr. Cushnie, which averaged 29 and 38 tons per acre.

Fine bright mild weather has prevailed at Invercargill for some time past and is being taken advantage of by farmers and contractors. Several farmers are putting in winter sown oats as an experiment.

A Royal Commission has been appointed to examine and inquire into the causes of the present depression of trade in England.

A considerable amount of interest is being manifested in the Bruce election at Milton (writes the *Daily Times* correspondent). Mr. Henry Driver, replying to a request to contest the seat, states that he is, owing to business arrangements, unable to do so. This announcement has caused great disappointment amongst Mr. Driver's supporters, as his chances of success were considerable. Mr. Donald Reid, solicitor, Milton, will become a candidate. The names of Messrs Jas. Adam, W. Hutchinson, and R. Darling are also mentioned as likely to come forward. It is thought probable that Mr. W. A. Murray will be requested by a large number of his old friends and partisans to come south and again offer himself as a candidate for the Bruce seat, which he so ably occupied in days of yore.

Four thousand French troops are to be sent to Madagascar, in compliance with the admiral's request for further reinforcements.

The Marquis of Salisbury's policy has been favourably commented on by the St. Petersburg and Continental Press.

In the House of Commons on Tuesday night Sir Michael Hicks-Beach announced to the House the programme of legislation brought down by the Government, which includes, among other things, a measure for facilitating the federation of various parts of the Empire. Mr. Gladstone spoke, and announced that the Opposition acquiesced in the proposals of the Government.—An early close of the session is looked forward to.

SATURDAY.

In the House of Representatives yesterday, replying to Mr. O'Connor, whether the Government will provide for the construction of a bridge over the Buller river at Lyell, that being the only large dangerous and unfordable river unbridged on the main road between Nelson and Greymouth and Westport, the Hon. E. Richardson said the work was a very expensive one, and inquiries would be made into the matter.—The following bills were introduced:—A bill to amend "The Police Offences Act 1884" (Mr. Fitzherbert), a bill to amend "The Napier Harbour Loan Act 1884" (Mr. Ormond).—Mr. Steward moved the second reading of the School Committees Election Bill. He said the principle of the bill had been already affirmed by large majorities of the House. The bill proposed that the election should be held on the fourth Monday in April, instead of January,

so as not to interfere with harvest. The main point of the bill was the doing away with the present system of cumulative voting. The motion was carried on a division by 31 against 24.—Mr. Conolly moved the second reading of the Alienation of Land Bill. He said he regretted the Government had not taken the bill up, as it was one of large importance. The principle of the bill was to prevent the tying up of land to prevent its disposal by the owner. He said he would be glad to receive any suggestion on the bill. Carried on the voices.

Despite the low prices for grain, farmers in many parts of the Invercargill district are preparing to bring large areas under crop. The weather is very favourable to such operations, the days being bright and warm and the nights frosty.

An immense sensation has been caused in London by the *Pastoral Gazette* publishing an article under the guise of a reform of social evils, in consequence of which the paper has been expelled from all clubs and book-stalls. The police are also preventing the sale of the paper containing the offensive article, and the authorities threaten to take proceedings against the proprietor of the *Gazette*. In retaliation the proprietor of the paper threatens to publish disclosures which would involve Royalty and Cabinet Ministers.

In the House of Commons on Wednesday night Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Chancellor of the Exchequer, brought down the financial proposals of the new Government. He announced that suspension would be extended to the new sinking fund, and that Treasury bills to the extent of £4,000,000 had been issued. In other respects he was prepared to adhere to the scheme formulated by Mr. Childers in his recent statement when Chancellor. He informed the House that out of the extraordinary vote of £11,000,000, £10,000,000 had already been expended.

MONDAY.

Political gossip (says the Wellington correspondent of the *Daily Times*) is frightfully slack since the settlement of the tariff question; and if one could depend on the opinion expressed by a majority of members, the session will glide through the remainder of its course softly and easily, without encountering any more storms. There are some, however, who dissent from this view, and I am one. It seems to me that the absolute surrender by Ministers of everything demanded of them by a mutinous league of their followers carries in itself the seeds of much future danger, and I am not surprised to hear rumours of further disaffection as regards Ministerial measures. It is said, for instance, that in consequence of pretty strong intimations having been given to the Government by some of its staunchest allies that the new million loan will not go down, that proposal will probably be quietly dropped. From what I can hear, it is safe to be rejected if definitely submitted to the House. Then, again, it is by no means clear the local government scheme will be accepted even short of the 25 years' guarantee and borrowing powers. The Native Lands Disposition Bill, also, is menaced with a desperate resistance, and in the present temper of the House it is hardly possible that the public works proposals, whatever they may turn out to be, will fail to excite general grumbling. In fact the House is just now in a thoroughly disorganised state, and it is difficult to say in what direction the prevalent disaffection may break out next; but of one thing I am tolerably convinced, and that is that unless Ministers let their policy go overboard, get their Estimates passed, and send members about their business as speedily as possible, we shall see some more Parliamentary trouble ere very long. Already members are beginning to grumble at the nature of the compromise made by Government, on the ground that the promised financing is unsatisfactory. I should not be surprised to see a direct motion to this effect turn up bye-and-bye. Meanwhile an ominous calm prevails.

The gum stores at North Wairoa are being closed owing to over supply, and the Home market being overstocked; £20 a ton is now quoted.

The Russian preparations in Asia are causing grave anxiety, and it is feared the difficulty will be resumed in the autumn. The Russian Press claim that Russia is entitled to the territory lying at the foot of the Hindoo-Koosh Mountains in Afghanistan.

The London wool sales concluded on Friday. The closing prices range from 1/1 to 1d below the April closing rates, except for greasy and cross-bred sorts, which have recovered slightly. 323,000 bales were catalogued, of which 70,000 were withdrawn.

Brigadier-general Green, R.E., has proceeded to Assouam on the First Cataract, taking with him half the regiment of the 20th Hussars. General Brackenbury telegraphs a report that the Mahdi is dead, but the rumour is said to lack confirmation.

The number of cases of cholera reported to the Spanish sanitary authorities is on the decrease, and there are hopes that the violence of the epidemic is abating.

The monthly returns of the United States Agricultural Bureau just published estimate the coming American wheat crop at 363,000,000 bushels.

The meat by the ship Oamaru, from Wellington, is selling in London at 5d per lb.

TUESDAY.

Mr. Thomas Bracken (says the *Daily Times*) has received a requisition from electors at Milton and Kaitangata requesting him to contest the election for the Bruce seat. Mr. Bracken has been compelled through business engagements to decline the request, and has informed the requisitionists of his regret at not being able to comply with their wish.

In anticipation of the passing of Mr. Bradshaw's motion, the directors of the Kaiapoi Woolen Company have decided to work all young persons in their employ 5 1/2 days a week and pay them for that time. Previously they got a half-holiday on Saturday, and made up the time by working half an hour extra on the other days, and were paid for six days.

Prime New Zealand mutton is realising in London an average of 5 1/2 to 5 3/4 per lb.

It is announced that the Government have resolved to extend the Quetta-Peshawar Railway as far as the Kbojuk Pass, in the direction