

EXTRAORDINARY PROCEEDINGS AT SOUTH DUNEDIN.

THE Borough Council of South Dunedin—or rather a bare majority of its members—has succeeded in immortalising itself. The facts of the case are tersely put in the following editorial horse-whipping given to them by the *Dunedin Evening Star* of Monday under the heading of 'Contemptible tactics':—

'Our attention has been drawn to the very extraordinary conduct of the Mayor and certain councillors of South Dunedin last week, who, with the deliberate intention of disfranchising residents who had lodged claims to be placed on the Burgess roll, absented themselves from the meeting convened in accordance with the Act of 1899 for Thursday evening, and from the adjourned meetings held on Friday and Saturday. There is no question whatever that the Mayor and the members who thus absented themselves did so with the determination of preventing the 150 claimants from having their names placed on the roll, and thus in direct contravention of the intentions of the Legislature and the purpose of the Act these citizens have been deprived of municipal rights. It would be difficult to find language strong enough to denounce in fit terms such flagitious and contemptible tactics—such a gross perversion of official duty as has been perpetrated. The burgesses of the borough should rise as one man and demand the immediate resignation of the Mayor, his aiders and abettors. The object of the Municipal Franchise Reform Extension Act has been entirely defeated in South Dunedin, and might be so in any borough where a majority of the Council object to the extension of the franchise. We hope that the Government may take note of the matter, and bring in a short Bill declaring that the seat of any borough councillor who is absent from any two successive meetings or adjourned meetings of the Council without having obtained leave shall be *ipso facto* vacant.

Monday evening's meeting of the Council was a breezy one. The missing councillors turned up. At the close of the business they were called upon by Mr. Marlow to offer an explanation for their absence from the previous meetings. The Mayor (Mr. Fiddis) said he was very sorry that he was one of those who had not attended the meetings (says the *Otago Daily Times*). He had other places to go as well, that were as much benefit to him as the South Dunedin Council, and he thought he did exceedingly well if he kept away. He added that if he did not want to go out of a night it would take a screwjack to shift him. One of the councillors (Mr. Scott), who had absented himself from the meeting said he kept away out of utter contempt for the Government and the Act they had passed. Another (Cr. Botting) said he had engagements on Thursday and Saturday, and he was not going to postpone them for a thing he did not approve of. A third (Cr. Withrford) declared that the spirit did not move him to attend; whilst a fourth (Cr. Stirling) was not permitted by his medical adviser to be out at night, and had sent an apology to the Mayor. The latter intimated that he had 'put it (the apology) in his pocket to treat those four men (the councillors who attended the special meeting) with the contempt they deserved.'

From these remarks it is quite evident that the Mayor and some of the councillors of South Dunedin absented themselves from the meeting with the avowed intention of defeating the provisions of an Act of Parliament. We hope that the intelligent and fair-minded burgesses of South Dunedin will see to it that the Krugerism will not be permitted to be carried on with impunity in the borough, and that Mayor Fiddis will be speedily relegated to that obscurity which he is so well fitted to adorn.

THE CRISIS IN TRANSVAAL.

THERE was a lull in South African affairs towards the end of last week, and it looked as if the Transvaal authorities were about to accept the inevitable, and concede the demands of the Uitlanders as embodied in the proposals of Sir Alfred Milner.

The leading German newspapers described President Kruger's action in raising the suzerainty question as mental aberration and obstinacy, and the *Cologne Gazette* said if war was thus provoked nobody would move a finger to prevent the ruin of the ill-advised State.

From a discussion which took place in the Volksraad it appears that the Government had submitted to Mr. Chamberlain proposals, which meant a five years' franchise and one-fourth of the seats with equal rights in the election of president, which was equivalent to Sir Alfred Milner's original proposals, with the condition attached that Great Britain was not in future to interfere with the internal affairs of the Republic. This was tantamount to a relinquishment of her claims regarding the suzerainty.

Regarding these proposals Mr. Chamberlain declined to entertain the question of Great Britain relinquishing the rights contained in both conventions. He proposed a second convention at Capetown.

General Joubert, speaking at Boksburg, said there certainly would not be war if Great Britain did not ask further concessions.

It has transpired that the ammunition permitted by Mr. Schreiner to be landed at Port Elizabeth, and thence conveyed across Cape territory, was never intended for the Orange Free State, but went straight into the Transvaal. There is in consequence an intense anti-Schreiner feeling prevalent at the Cape.

A cable message dated Pretoria, September 2, stated that the Transvaal Government had consented to hold a conference at Capetown. When Mr. Chamberlain's despatch, declining to open the suzerainty question at the conference, was read in the Raad it was received with groans.

Active preparations for war are still going on in England, the First Royal Dragoon Guards are ordered to be in readiness to start for the Cape, and 2500 men are ready at Aldershot for mobilisation. Great military activity prevails at the Cape, and several hundred volunteers have been enrolled at Natal.

Warlike preparations are going on, too, in the Transvaal. Boer women's rifle clubs are being formed in several districts. A great exodus of Uitlanders continues from Johannesburg and other towns of the Transvaal. A German corps of 900 men to assist the Boers has been formed in Johannesburg. The Transvaal Government are requisitioning for railway rolling stock. There is a general panic at Johannesburg and the distress is terrible, the food supplies being inadequate. At Pretoria it is believed war is inevitable.

Martial law prevails in Johannesburg, and warrants are out against a number of Uitlanders. The editor of the *Transvaal Leader* has been arrested on a charge of high treason. The arrest has created a great sensation.

A Pretoria message, dated last Monday, stated that the majority of the Raad demanded the declaration of the country's independence. It was reported, also, on the same date that President Kruger had withdrawn the second proposal for a five years' franchise, and that the Capetown Conference has been declined.

NOTES FROM THE HOUSE.

PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.

(From our special correspondent).

THE House, on resuming on Tuesday afternoon, spent some time in the consideration of the Government proposals with reference to a Pacific cable. The resolutions submitted to the House by the Premier were to the effect that this Colony join in the cost of construction of a Pacific cable with Great Britain, Canada, New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland; that the cable be owned and managed by the contributory Governments; that New Zealand's share of the guarantee should not exceed in any case one-eighth of the whole cost. The Premier explained that the proposal was to take the cable through all British country, and therefore there would be less liability to mistakes in cablegrams; and in case of war, the cable would be under British control. The fact that the Imperial authorities had joined in the proposal would mean that the line would be properly worked, and that the money would be got cheaply. Under the present system the lines passed through 17 different places, hence the necessity for an all red line from a national and commercial standpoint. He was satisfied the line would be of advantage to this Colony.

Nearly all the speakers considered it desirable that such a cable should be constructed, and in the course of the discussion it was stated that the charges would be reduced from 9s 4d per word to 4s, and that £180,000 would be the amount of this Colony's guarantee.

The resolutions were slightly altered in Committee, and as amended were agreed to by the House.

The remainder of the evening was devoted to consideration of the Estimates. On the item for Parliamentary reporting being reached, exception was taken to the action of the chief of the staff, who, it was alleged, had contributed a signed article to an American paper. After discussion the matter was referred to the Speaker.

The whole of Wednesday afternoon was devoted to answering questions and formal business. A Loan Bill for one million sterling was read a first time.

In the evening the Government Loan to Local Bodies Bill, which is a measure intended to confer the same power on town districts as on boroughs, with regard to borrowing, was read a second time.

The Totalisator Gradual Extinction Bill, introduced by Mr. Flatman, was discussed for some time, and the debate thereon adjourned. The measure seeks to provide that the number of totalisator permits issued in 1900 shall not exceed 156; 1901, 117; 1902, 78; 1903, 39; and that from and after 1904 no licenses shall be issued.

On Thursday afternoon the Premier laid on the table papers respecting the proposed sea service connecting New Zealand with the federal mail service at Sydney. It is proposed to call for tenders for a monthly service between New Zealand and Sydney, the time not to exceed four days six hours, and the contract to have a currency of two years. Penalties are provided for excess contract time, and the steamers engaged in the work are not to be less than 2000 tons. The present mail arrangements, said the Premier, were not satisfactory, and it was to save time that he had brought down the papers, which had been justified by the recommendation by the Extension of Commerce Committee. At present they had no alternative to the San Francisco service, with which his proposal would not interfere.

After considerable discussion the matter was referred to a committee of the whole House.

In the evening the Loan Bill came on for the second reading. A protracted debate ensued, and from the remarks of the speakers it was evident there was very little opposition to the loan, the main objection being to the method of allocating the money. If only each member got what he thought was the right of his district, not one but ten millions would be required.

On Friday afternoon the proposals with regard to the improved mail service were again discussed. A motion that the time between Wellington and Sydney be limited to four days was carried, after which progress was reported.

The debate on the Loan Bill was then resumed, but the speech delivered contained little of general interest. The debate was carried on until the early hours of Saturday morning, when the second reading was carried by 29 votes to 15.

DEAR ME, I

I've forgotten that SYMINGTON COFFEE ESSENCE, whatever shall I do? Call at the next Store on pass, They All Keep it