

LOBBY GOSSIP AND NEWS.

The Loan Bill, which was introduced on Wednesday afternoon, authorises the Government to borrow a million sterling for specified objects. The money is to be allocated as follows:—Railway extension, £300,000; rolling stock and work in connection with existing lines, £225,000; land settlement, goldfields, and the construction of roads and bridges, £150,000; opening up Crown and native lands, £150,000; developing goldfields, £50,000; school buildings, £50,000; purchase of native lands, £50,000; harbour defences, £25,000.

The end of the session is evidently drawing nigh, as the private members' day—Wednesday—has been appropriated by the Government, the result of which is that many of our old friends, such as the Liquor, the Marriage and Libel Bills will disappear from the Order Paper.

Speaking on the subject of improved mail communication the other night, Mr. Massey said he had made inquiries and he had the very best authority for stating that the first of the new steamers for the 'Frisco' service would be ready in nine months, the second in 15 months, and the third later on. Such being the case, in 12 months from now they might have a 28 days' service between England and New Zealand, via San Francisco, once a month, and in two years' time they might have a 28 days' service every fortnight.

The House had not proceeded far in the consideration of the Estimates on Tuesday evening when members got completely 'off the track,' and everything under the sun was discussed save the immediate business of the Colony. Several warm, wordy encounters, largely punctuated with personalities, took place, and shortly after midnight Captain Russell moved the adjournment of the House as he was tired of hearing members reviling one another.

NEW ZEALAND: GENERAL.

THE Hon. John McKenzie is to leave England for this Colony by the Gothic on the 28th inst.

WE understand that Mr. James O'Donnel, of Mosgiel, has purchased the Crescent Hotel, Allanton.

MR. FRANK TRASK, who lately resigned the Nelson Mayoralty, owing to having sold land to the Council, has been re-elected unopposed.

AT Masterton last week, Mr. Northcroft, S.M., fined the four men who had misrepresented themselves as travellers to a hotel-keeper, £5 each.

A MISSION was opened in St. Mary's Church, Geraldine, on Sunday, by the Right Rev. Dr. Grimes, Bishop of Christchurch, assisted by the Rev. Father Foley. The mission is to last a week.

FRIENDS of Mr. E. O'Malley (says the *Temuka Leader*) will be pleased to learn that he is to settle once more in Geraldine, having received an appointment in the firm of Messrs. Maling and Shallcrass, auctioneers.

THE Right Hon. R. J. Seddon has been appointed a Justice of the Peace for Queensland. The Premier's public duties in New Zealand will prevent him for some time from presiding at any of the Queensland police courts.

THE Consul for France and the Countess de Courte are about to pay a visit to Brisbane, where they will be the guests of Lord and Lady Lamington. The Governor of Queensland, it is known, is a cousin to Count de Courte.

OUR Timaru correspondent writes:—The many friends of Mr. J. Hickson, Clerk of the Court here, will regret to hear that he has been urgently called to Auckland in consequence of the serious illness of his father, ex-Inspector Hickson.

IT has transpired that the Government offered £4 8s 6d per acre for the Three Springs Estate, Fairlie. The owners declined, asking £4 10s. The Mackenzie County Council was consulted, and replied that the Government had offered sufficient for it. The Land Purchase Board intends to inspect three estates in the district.

THERE are 172 children in the Government Industrial Schools, and 399 in private schools—a total of 571. Of these, 75 were convicted for offences but not sentenced, and three were convicted and sentenced to be whipped. There are 11 children in the Auckland School, 86 at Burnham, 75 at Caversham, 84 at St. Mary's (Auckland), 64 at St. Joseph's (Wellington), 240 at St. Mary's (Nelson), and 11 at St. Vincent de Paul's (Dunedin).

IT is said that the marble deposits on the Takaka (Nelson) hills are about to be fairly tested by a Christchurch syndicate. There are all shades of stone, varying from black to white, while some are beautifully variegated, and it is believed, on authority of one of the southern representatives, that the marble is splendidly adapted for ornamental work in building, the only question being whether it can be procured free from shakes in sufficiently sized slabs, and that is to be ascertained by opening out in one or two likely looking spots.

THERE was a large attendance of members at the usual weekly meeting of the Ashburton Catholic Literary Society (reports the *Mail*), held on Wednesday evening. The president (Mr. F. Cooper) occupied the chair. The Rev. Father Cooney, the Society's chaplain, made his first appearance amongst them, and was heartily welcomed by all present. After the transaction of minor business the programme for the evening was proceeded with. It took the form of 'An Editor's box,' which provided a most enjoyable and instructive evening's entertainment.

OUR Timaru correspondent wrote on Monday:—The purchase of the Pareora estate has given much satisfaction in this district. Many are making enquiries about the land, which we hear is very good. The property is quite close to St. Andrew's, where the Catholics intend to erect a church shortly, for which they have already a considerable amount in hand. The Three Springs Estate, which also has been acquired by the Government, is in this parish. It is situated about three miles from Fairlie, and has always been considered one of the best paying stations owned by the company.

THE annual report of the Inspector-General of Hospitals and Charitable Institutions was presented to the House on Wednesday. The total amount expended on charitable aid for the year ending 31st March was £93,000 odd, which was an increase of nearly £7000 on the previous year. Of this amount close on £51,000 was distributed in outdoor relief. The total receipts on account of hospitals were £116,524, of which £41,052 came out of the Consolidated Revenues. The report referred to the marked shrinkage of voluntary contributions in connection with the maintenance of benevolent institutions.

THE new church now in course of erection for the congregation of St. Michael's (says the *Kaikoura Star*) has reached that stage which enables an idea to be formed of what the building will look like when finished. The estimate we have arrived at is that the edifice will be one of which pastor, congregation, architects and builder will have good reason to be thoroughly satisfied with. When the present contract is finished the building will be a fitting memento of the pastorate of one who is held in the highest esteem and veneration by the people of Kaikoura. The zeal of the Rev. Father Walsh and the devotion of his flock is exemplified, in a marked manner, in what has been done by them in so short a space of time. Few clergymen, of any denomination, have had the gratification of seeing two new churches erected through their efforts in a couple of years, in a district like Kaikoura. That credit, however, is due to the Rev. Father Walsh and his congregations here.

THE *New Era*, of July 29, contains a portrait and biographical sketch of the Right Rev. Dr. Lenihan, Bishop of Auckland. In concluding its remarks the *New Era* says:—'On Sunday, July 16, he preached morning and evening at Blundellsands, on the progress of the Church in New Zealand. He has been cordially received and entertained by the Bishop of Liverpool, who showed him round his excellent institutions for boys and girls. His Lordship is invited to share in the jubilee celebrations of the Catholic Young Men's Society in Liverpool in the first week of August, and has been further approached by several leading rectors of the diocese of Liverpool with a view to a public utterance. The Bishop of Auckland is appealing earnestly for students and church furniture, and hopes to meet with a generous response from the good hearts of the great home countries. Dr. Lenihan has a very strong view on "Joan of Arc." He thinks of appealing to his brother prelates in the English-speaking lands to take up the cause of her beatification in reparation for the admittedly unjust sentence passed upon her by the members of the episcopal bench. Of such men—men of sound and progressive ideas—the Church has need in this latter age.' The same issue also contains a special article detailing the history of the Auckland mission.

THE half-yearly meeting of the Marist Brothers' School Old Boys' Association, Wellington, was held in St. Patrick's Hall, on Wednesday evening August 30. The Rev. Father O'Shea presided, and there were about fifty members present. Mr. J. A. Gallagher, hon. sec. of the association, has sent us a copy of the report submitted to the meeting, but, in consequence of the great pressure on our space this week, we are reluctantly obliged to condense it. The following are the principal matters referred to:—The association is on a sound financial basis; a literary and debating society has been formed in connection with it; there had been several entertainments given during the half-year to members and friends; lectures had been delivered before the Association by Rev. Father Servajean, and Messrs. Reichel and Kays; gifts of books for the library had been received from the Ven. Archdeacon Devoy, Dr. Mackin and Mr. J. J. Devine; a fine billiard table had been procured; the success of the Association has been in a great measure due to the special interest taken in it by the Ven. Archdeacon Devoy, V.G. The report was adopted. The following were elected officers for the ensuing term:—Patron, his Grace Archbishop Redwood; President, Ven. Archdeacon Devoy; Vice-presidents, Very Rev. Father Lewis, Rev. Fathers Servajean and O'Shea, Doctors Grace and Mackin, and Messrs. M. Kennedy, J. J. Devine, J. Curnin, J. Kays, and J. O'Meara; hon. secretary, Mr. J. A. Gallagher (re-elected); hon. treasurer, Mr. F. McDonald; librarian, Mr. G. A. McKenzie; assistant librarian, Mr. J. McGovern; auditors, Messrs. W. Nidd and J. J. Weybourne; committee, Messrs. Healy, Fitzgerald, E. D. Dunne, O'Brien and McKenzie. Mr. J. Kays was elected chairman of the Literary Society and editor of the journal, and Mr. J. McGovern, sub-editor. It was decided by the meeting to hold the annual picnic, and also a banquet to celebrate the anniversary of the association, the arrangements for both being left in the hands of the committee. A hearty vote of thanks to the Rev. chairman for presiding, and to the outgoing officers, terminated the meeting.

Messrs. J. Ballantyne and Co., of Dunstable House, Christchurch, in calling attention to their spring shipments, now being opened up, report the receipt of possibly the finest assortment of seasonable novelties ever seen in any retail warehouse in Christchurch. The fashions and styles for spring, 1899, are extremely beautiful, and the firm's buyers have filled the requirements of the establishment, not only in great variety but in substantial quantities, thus securing a fine assortment at moderate prices. Customers residing at a distance are requested to send a post-card specifying any particular class of goods they desire to see, and an assortment will be sent by return of post.—* * *