

Interprovincial

The A.M.P. Society has £2,825,326 invested on mortgage of freehold in this Dominion, and there is not a penny of interest overdue.

The seventeenth annual winter show of the Otago A. and P. Society was opened on Tuesday afternoon. The ceremony was performed by the Hon. Thomas Mackenzie (Minister of Agriculture).

Among the items of expenditure (says the *Press*) appearing on statement of accounts for the month rendered to the Tramway Board yesterday, was £1, 'sovereign given for 3d,' and £1 10s 'compensation re suit.'

Messrs. J. and W. Jamieson (Limited), of Christchurch, are (says a Wellington message) the successful tenderers for the construction of the Auckland post office. The contract price is £90,551. Eight other tenders were received, ranging from £98,901 to £122,999.

Some 300 building trade laborers have left Wellington for Australia in the last six months, says the secretary of the union, who declares that there are fully 2000 less artisans and laborers employed in the Empire City now than this time last year.

At Wellington on Thursday a barrister pleading before Mr. Justice Cooper found occasion to refer to 'the Law's delay.' The learned judge, with a quick glance at the members of the Bar present, corrected him. He quietly said, 'You mean the lawyer's delay!'

During a discussion at the Southland Farmers' Union conference concerning the efficacy of trapping as compared with poisoning as a means of keeping down rabbits, Mr. Jno. McQueen, managing director of the Southland Frozen Meat Company, mentioned that the number of rabbits sent forward for freezing was getting less every year.

It is understood (says the *Press*) that the Waimarama Estate, Methven, the property of the trustees of the late John Deans, will be cut up for closer settlement in about six months' time. The land is of good quality throughout, and it is anticipated that competition will be keen for every section. Waimarama is situated five miles from Methven township, and contains about 4000 acres.

The Bharal sheep, specimens of which the Hon. T. Mackenzie proposes to liberate in 'some part of the Dominion,' is the blue sheep of Thibet. The male stands 3ft high, with horns from 24in to 26in long. In Thibet the Bharal is found in herds of 10 to 100 on the high, open ground above the forests, and is never found at a lesser elevation than 10,000ft. It will not breed with domestic sheep. The Bharal is well represented in the London Zoo.

'The biggest wooden building in the world,' as residents of Wellington describe the pile of Government Buildings, will soon have a complete system of automatic alarms as a protection against its greatest danger, fire, the Government having decided to have the May-Oatway system installed (says the *Lyttelton Times*). Every room will have in it at least one thermostat, which completes an electrical circuit immediately the temperature rises to danger point, and sets powerful alarm gongs ringing at the main entrance and outside the building, and also at the city fire brigade station. A large indicator in the main lobby will show at a glance the centre of the outbreak, the thermostats in each big room being connected direct with a shutter on the indicator, while smaller rooms are grouped in circuits of two or three.

Some interesting figures showing the tremendous annual slaughter of small birds were quoted by Mr. K. Wilson at the meeting of the Selwyn County Council the other day (says the *Press*). The figures for the three years, 1906, 1907, 1908, were respectively as follow: Small birds, 118,292, 262,309, and 183,482; blackbirds, 9582, 10,586, and 9800. The average number of small birds' eggs bought annually was 450,915, and at one half-penny each, the amount paid was £939. The council decided that from June 1 to September 30 it would pay 1s per dozen for old birds' heads, and the usual price for eggs. Steps will also be taken to distribute poisoned wheat.

A rather amusing incident happened at Blenheim the other day. A Maori case was being heard, and the evidence of one weighty witness was required. It was the case of Mahomet and the mountain over again (remarks an exchange), only in this case the magistrate, clerk of court, crier, interpreter, counsel, and witness were Mahomet. The too substantial proportions of the witness prevented him from walking into the courthouse, so the Court adjourned into the yard at the rear of the Government Build-

ings, whither the weighty witness was drawn by his sturdy steed. He sat in his trap, was examined and cross-examined, and went his way, while the officials returned into the courtroom and proceeded with the case. Quite a crowd assembled to witness the curious performance.

A pleasant-faced farmer from Shannon, whose ideas on electoral etiquette were more chivalrous than up to date, told the Farmers' Union Conference, which met at Eketahuna, how he was enlightened (says the *Post*). There was a local body elected at Palmerston, and his friends nominated him. He got his voting paper, and the first name he struck off it was his own. He left on the paper the full number of names which corresponded with the vacancies. When the poll was declared he was amongst the defeated. Next day he told the returning officer what he had done, and that official exclaimed, 'Man, man! why did you do that?' The man from Shannon said he did it because it was what every candidate did. 'Oh, no they didn't,' was the unexpected answer, 'what they did was to strike out every name but their own!'

'Pelorus Jack,' as the dolphin or grampus, which acts as pilot to vessels passing through the French Pass is called, is not, as popularly supposed, protected by Act of Parliament, but by Government Proclamation, given under the hand of his Excellency the Governor-in-Council. Although intended primarily to safeguard the noted white fish of the Sound, it is made to extend to all of the species within certain limits. In the *Gazette* of September 27, 1904, it was stipulated that during a period of five years from that date it would not be lawful for any person 'to take the fish or mammal of the species commonly known as Rissois dolphin (grampus griseus) in the waters of Cook Strait or of the bays, sounds, and estuaries adjacent thereto.' Offenders against this regulation are liable to a penalty of not less than £5 nor more than £100. Hence, so far as the Government is concerned at present (says the *Post*), this strange marine anomaly is protected so long as he remains content with his old haunts, and if any of his brethren come to join him in his habitat they will also share the measure of protection afforded by the regulation of September, 1904. This period of grace will expire on September 29th next, but is sure to be renewed.

In connection with the retrenchment scheme (writes the Wellington correspondent of the *Otago Daily Times*), several of the Government publications will be merged into one. The *Mines Record*, the Agricultural Department's publications, and the Insurance Department's monthly publication will now cease as separate issues. Mr. Galvin, editor of the *Mines Record*, will be retired, and Mr. Bisset will edit the new publication. The *School Journal* is not affected by the change. While it is about it the Government might look into the question of departmental reports to Parliament. Many of these have in the past been unnecessarily long, so much so, indeed, that judicious sub-editing of several, such as the Agricultural Report and the Health Report, would in the course of years effect a saving of thousands of pounds. It is understood that the Government also contemplates a saving in the working of the Tutaneikai, which in future will be reserved for cable repairing. The vessel will once more be taken over by the Postal Department, and will lie in Wellington Harbor ready for emergencies. It has been suggested that the bacteriological laboratory in connection with the Health Department should cease operations, but it is doing such good work in the interests of health that it may be allowed to remain.

OBITUARY

MR. ARCHIBALD DE LARGEY, WAIKAIA.

We regret to have to record the death, at Waikaia, on May 13, of Mr. Archibald De Largey, who passed away at the age of 62 years. The deceased, who was a native of Ballycastle, County Antrim, came out to New Zealand in 1864, and after being engaged for a time on the railway at the Bluff, he went to the goldfields, and worked in most of the districts in Otago and Southland. Later on he started in business in Otautau, from there he went to Oreti, and eventually settled down at Waikaia, of which he had been a resident for the past eighteen years. The deceased was well known in Southland, and was highly esteemed by a large circle of friends. He was a man of the most kindly disposition, and was extremely charitable. A Requiem Mass for the repose of his soul was celebrated by the Rev. Father Keenan, who also officiated at the interment in the Waikaia Cemetery. The deceased leaves a widow, five sons, and two daughters to mourn their loss.—R.I.P.