

long been forgotten. It is possible to legislate against importations which may bring other diseases in their train. The importation of hides to New Zealand from Queensland and India was for many years forbidden, and at the present moment the importation of swine to Australia from New Zealand is illegal. But such precautions are temporary. The tick passed away in Queensland, and the rinderpest in India. New Zealand may at any moment be declared free from swine fever. When that occurs, the restrictions will be removed, and without visible evil effects. But nothing except total and perpetual prohibition can guard against a disease that may lurk in bones for twenty years and then resume its deadly progress.

### Cause and Effect.

A whimsical reasoner once pointed out the relation that existed between old maids and the agricultural returns. The estimable ladies aforesaid encourage cats, which live on mice. These feed on the crops, and so the relation between spinsters and the wheat yield is established. The liability of New Zealand to stock diseases from foreign parts is increased by the spread of the dairy industry. The connection comes about in this way: The tendency in a dairying country is to breed cows alone, and that of small and fine quality. The hides from these are thin and unsuited for many purposes where thick leather is required. Therefore though there might be a large surplus of hides to export from the Colony, it would still be necessary to import a certain quantity of the coarse kinds to meet the demand mentioned. At all events that was the reason put forward by a very large firm of New Zealand tanners some years ago in support of a request to relax the stringency against importing hides from Queensland and India. But the relation comes about in another way. Dairy farming leads to the laying down of greater areas under artificial pasture. This necessitates more manure, which must be imported. Any farmer, therefore, who buys crushed bones may be unwittingly laying down a fever bed, which may spring into mischievous activity many years after, when the ground is ploughed again. Nor is anthrax the only disease which may thus lie latent in the soil for many years. In this very same district, Woodlands, a devastating scourge of diphtheria was clearly attributable to the over manuring of some fields with refuse from the local meat-preserving works. The fields were famous for their luxuriant pastures, but it was at a heavy price. It is well known that germs of typhoid and similar zymotic diseases may remain hidden under the soil for many years, ready at any moment to start into activity.

### Unheeded Warnings.

The Government goes to great expense in employing veterinary experts to teach farmers how to prevent and combat stock diseases. The first one to be so employed was Mr. Gilruth, who has since added to his knowledge of bacteriology by a visit to the most famous Continental laboratories. In one of his earlier reports Mr. Gilruth devoted considerable space to this very subject of anthrax. He pointed out its symptoms, its methods of propagation, and the precautions which should be taken. But for all practical purposes Mr. Gilruth's report might as well never have been written, for it has remained buried in a blue book ever since. Even were a copy of it reprinted and posted to everyone concerned, so little interest is taken in a subject considered only indirect that it is problematical whether it would be studied. That this is no exaggeration is proved by experience with respect to other reports published by the same department. Leaflets are periodically issued with illustrations depicting some noxious weed or some interesting phase of vegetable life. Not only are these leaflets widely circulated, but they are reproduced in most agricultural papers, yet the leaven of information spreads with exasperating slowness. In like manner Dr. Mason's graphic pamphlet about vaccination has been received with stony indifference by the public, and the department now finds it necessary to commence a wholesale series of prosecutions, of which the public will probably hear something in a few days. Crushed bones should never be used for manure unless there is an absolute guarantee that they have been steamed. It is stated with respect to the Woodlands case that even a certificate of purification may be valueless. In that view of the case the importation of bones should be rigorously watched, and they should not be suffered to go into use without the fullest surety that they are not charged with danger. Otherwise New Zealand will very soon lose its boasted pre-eminence as a land free from noxious diseases.

## DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN.

The annual retreat of the clergy of the diocese of Dunedin commences on the 26th inst., and will be conducted by the Very Rev. Father Le Menant des Obeisais, V.G., Christchurch. At the close of the retreat the Diocesan Synod will be held.

On Sunday last there was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Joseph's Cathedral from last Mass until Vespers. In the evening there was the usual procession, in which the children of the parish schools and the members of the Sacred Heart Society took part.

It has been pointed out to us that in our report of the breaking-up concert in connection with St. Dominic's College the name of Miss Josephine Griffen was omitted from the list of successful candidates at the musical examinations held under the auspices of the Royal College of Music. Miss Griffen passed in singing in the higher division, school examinations. The responsibility for the omission does not rest with us.

A pleasing ceremony took place on Friday afternoon at the residence of Rev. Father Hunt (writes a Cromwell correspondent) when Miss Mabel Jolly was presented with a very handsome dressing case by the members of the Catholic community here. The rev. gentleman, when handing the dressing case to the recipient, tendered her the hearty thanks of the congregation and his own for the very valuable services rendered on several occasions by Miss Jolly, and dwelt on the fact that this young lady was always willing to place her musical abilities at the service of any religious or charitable function, which materially assisted to their success. His remarks were heartily applauded by the company present, and Miss Jolly feelingly responded, and tendered her sincere thanks for the handsome and unexpected present.

## NEW ZEALAND: GENERAL.

A survey has been completed of the land given by the Maoris at Korinth, 40 miles up the Wanganui river, for a Maori industrial village.

The Athenaeum and Public Library at Westport was totally destroyed by fire last week. Only a few books were saved. The loss is fully £500 over the insurance.

Unprecedented prices (says the Winton 'Record') are ruling for all kinds of stock, cattle and sheep being in special demand. Many buyers from Canterbury and other places have been searching the district for several weeks past.

Writing under date November 28 the London correspondent of the 'Evening Star' reports that Mr. Arthur B. O'Brien (Guy's) has passed the first professional examination for the diploma of Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons.

The Northern Steamship Company's Gairloch was wrecked on Monday morning at Oakura on the voyage from Onehunga to Kawhia, Raglan, and Wanganui. There were no lives lost.

The Irish Athletic Society of Southland is again to the fore with an excellent programme for St. Patrick's sports in March. The secretary (Mr. T. P. Gilfedder) informs us that already indications are apparent of next sports meeting being an unqualified success.

The 'Almanac' of the diocese of Maitland, a copy of which has just come to hand, is a book which is admirable in its outlines, being a comprehensive account of the past and present position of the see over which the venerable prelate, the Right Rev. Dr. Murray, rules.

An outbreak of anthrax has occurred at Woodlands. Two cows died, and two are recovering. Mr. Gilruth expressed the opinion that the disease is due to Calcutta bones used as a fertiliser. This is the first time the dreaded disease has appeared in the South Island. It is feared that when the sheep are placed on turnips the mortality will be heavy.

The Police Provident Fund, which has been in operation for three years, has a credit balance of £17,600, which is invested in the Public Trust Office at 3½ per cent. Pensions are now paid to 29 ex-members of the force, one widow, and three orphans. The largest pensions are those of ex-Inspectors McGovern and Pender, £240 each. The interest earned during the past year is nearly sufficient to pay both of these pensions.

The crops immediately south of Christchurch do not seem to have been injured by the recent heavy rains. Some of the wheat crops, according to local reports, look in splendid condition, the ears being full and heavy, and the straw vigorous and strong, so that there is every promise of a bountiful return at the coming harvest. In the oat paddocks, however, the rain has been responsible for extensive damage.

The railway traffic in Dunedin during the New Year holidays was very heavy. On the 1st inst. over 2100 passengers were taken to Puketeraki and Waikouaiti, in addition to which hundreds took tickets to Oamaru, Waitati, Seachiff, etc. The special trains to Christchurch and Invercargill on New Year's Eve took 420 passengers. On New Year's Day the traffic on the south line was also heavy, being considerably over a thousand, whilst as many more went as far as Port Chalmers, etc. As will be seen the authorities had their hands pretty full, and it is highly gratifying as well as complimentary to the Department that the traffic was carried out without a single hitch or mishap of any kind.