

## Interprovincial

It is reported that the Government intends to put motors next summer between Clyde, Pembroke, and Queenstown.

The pear crop in the Hastings district this year has been very satisfactory, and in one instance almost phenomenal. Mr. Kirkham, of Mangateretere, gathered from two trees 103 cases.

There are at present 232 newspapers published in New Zealand, and registered at the General Post Office, Wellington. Of these 67 are daily, 32 thrice weekly, 26 twice weekly, 68 weekly, 4 fortnightly, 33 monthly, one every three weeks, and one every four weeks.

According to New Zealand Products Export Leaflet No. 83, issued by the Department of Commerce, the value of the principal products passed through the Customs in February totalled £2,962,778, as compared with £2,432,754 in the corresponding month of 1909, being an increase of £530,024, equal to about 22½ per cent.

How many people really give any serious attention to a tramway warning bell? In the opinion of Mr. W. R. Haselden, S.M., very few. 'We hear the bells so frequently,' he said at an inquest in Wellington the other day, 'that we take very little notice of them. It is like the Town Clock bells. We live beside them and seldom hear them.'

The exports for the eleven months ended February amounted to £17,379,228, as compared with £13,323,399 for the corresponding period of the previous year, the increase being equal to £4,005,829. For the twelve months ended February, 1910, the exports totalled £19,768,880, as against £14,928,999 for the previous twelve months, the increase being £4,839,881, which is very substantial and very satisfactory.

A new use for a pet magpie has been discovered at a farmhouse a few miles from Winchester. The daughter of the house has a pet magpie, and she has trained this bird to destroy flies. As is usual in the summer, the kitchen has a good supply of flies on the ceiling and walls. The bird has been taught to sit on the end of the broom held up by one of the family in this position; he is raised to the ceiling, and the way in which he eats the flies up is wonderful. Flypapers are not needed when he is about.

A sad boating fatality occurred at Greymouth on Sunday evening, when three young men named William Winterburn, John Carley, and John Debaker were drowned in trying to cross the Grey bar in an oil launch. The sea was fairly rough. When half way across they attempted to return, when the launch swamped. One of the men clung to an oar for some time, and the tug went out, but he disappeared before he could be reached. The affair has caused quite a gloom, as the young men were well known. Their ages ranged from 20 years to 24 years.

Notice has been served by the New Zealand Shipping Company on the Auckland Harbor Board of its intention to claim £163,687 damages, caused by the striking of the Kaipara on an uncharted rock in Rangitoto channel on January 14. The damage to the ship is put down at £82,687. In the grounds of the intended action, as set out, it is alleged that the board was guilty of breaches of duty and negligence, but for which the accident and consequent damage would not have been brought about.

From the days of the Crimean war to March, 1910, seems a far cry, and many of those who played their part in those stirring times have one by one stepped behind the scenes. It must have been a warm greeting that took place last week between Mrs. Evans, lessee of the Hawera Railway Refreshment Rooms, and Mr. Neville Thornton, of Wanganui. Mrs. Evans was one of the band of nurses organised by Florence Nightingale to nurse the wounded in the Crimean war, and Mr. Thornton was one of the wounded under her charge in the hospital at Scutari. Though 80 years of age, Mrs. Evans is still active and hearty, and takes a keen interest in current events.

Mr. Young, a resident of Addington, an employee of the Railway Department, at present acting as fireman on the Rangiora line, who has been experimenting with flying machines, has constructed the model of an aeroplane. It has two rows of small planes, with 14 planes in each row, and, looked at from above or below, resembles a diamond-shape, from which the top and bottom points have been cut off, leaving six sides. The experimenter has selected this model out of six that he tried. He says that he reckons to get considerably more lifting power out of it than can be obtained from biplanes of the same dimensions now in use, and that it will be lighter and stronger than those now built. It will not be so wide, and will take up less space. The working machine will be driven by a 50 horse-power engine, and will have two propellers.

That the rabbit pest is more prevalent in the country this year than for some time past is (says the *Southern Standard*) evident by the number that are daily brought into the Matura works by rail, carts, etc. The season commenced only on Monday last, and already several thousand carcasses have been handled, the packers being kept busy until midnight. The heat of the early part of the

week had a disastrous effect on some of the consignments, and it is stated that already as much as £100 worth of rejects have been put aside. One lot was so badly affected that it was impossible to skin them. As much as 7½d per pair is being paid this year to rabbiters, some of whom are said to be earning as much as £2 per day. Every morning boys attending school are to be seen taking their catches to the market, and some of them earn good pocket money by this means.

It is expected that a diamond drill and expert will arrive at Orepuki this month to thoroughly prospect the locality for shale deposits. The Shale Company has arranged for the work to be expeditiously carried out.

As a result of the large amount of money offered to the Invercargill Corporation on deposit, the council has reduced the rates of interest given, in order to discourage the inflow of this money by offering it less hospitality in the way of terms.

The Wellington City Council has decided to charge double fares on the trams on Good Friday, and permanently established the rule that on all Christmas Days and Good Fridays double fares be charged. During the Easter holidays luggage carried on the cars will be charged at passenger rates.

No more alterations are to be made in passenger fares. Extra toll having been demanded of the long-distance traveller, the Railway Department is satisfied. 'The fares are now on a permanent basis,' states the Hon. J. A. Millar (Minister for Railways). 'I intend to deal with long-distance goods rates, but there is not going to be any material alteration. I will endeavor to preserve the concessions to the public, and only make changes where the present rates are absolutely unremunerative and do not promote further trade, or where abuses have crept in. As a result of the conference of district traffic managers, the proposals for reorganising goods services to small stations have been fully considered, and will shortly come before me for final approval.'

'Yes,' said an Eketahuna pioneer to a *Dominion* reporter, 'we've got to pay our dairy factory hands fortnightly now. Talking about pay, I can't help thinking the old way we had in the early days was the best. A young fellow couldn't help getting a nest-egg for a start then. Take my case. I came out here away back with £40 in my pocket. I got a job on a station at £1 a week for the first year, with a rise to £1 10s the second year. I drew what I needed, and the runholder was glad enough, as they all were, to pay me 5 per cent. on my money. At the end of five or six years I left with a tidy round sum to make a start on. Of course, one used to hear of men knocking down their cheques in a few weeks, but there were plenty, I can tell you, who kept clear of that. Take the young fellows to-day, with their dribs and drabs coming in every week. They never have anything. It's through their fingers like water.'

A somewhat amusing incident occurred to a down train last Monday morning (says a Wairarapa paper). Just before reaching Matarawa there is a crossing from one paddock to another, and a farmer was driving his cows across in a leisurely manner when the train came along. The engine-driver whistled and slackened down, but 'Biddy' and 'Daisy' and the rest of the cows strolled carelessly along, and the train pulled up altogether. A move was made again, and one cow went along in front of the engine, defying the 'cow-catcher.' More speed was put on, and the cow went faster. Speed was slackened again, and the cow slackened also, but still kept on the right-of-way. The fireman was doing some good shooting with lumps of coal, but failed to register a 'bull's-eye.' At last, after a good run, the guard dismounted from the train, ran ahead of the engine, and cleared the cow off into a small stream, where she stood calmly watching the 'rural train' crawl off at its usual speed. No one was in a hurry—only a branch line—and no one in the Wairarapa has a right to be in a hurry on the trains now.

A deputation, headed by Mr. J. C. Gleeson, presented a petition to the Mayor of Napier recently, praying that St. Patrick's Day be proclaimed a public holiday. The petition was as follows:—'We, the undersigned petitioners, request you as Mayor of Napier to proclaim a holiday on March 17, St. Patrick's Day. We beg leave to say that it is a great national festive day celebrated as a holiday in almost all parts of the English-speaking world. As far as matters local are concerned, it is already a bank, legal, and Government holiday; it is also race day—as far as our own immediate community is concerned. Consequently it is with every assurance of success we petitioners humbly pray of you this request.' Fourteen hundred signatures were attached to the petition. The Mayor said: 'It gives me very much pleasure to grant the request of the petition, and I will instruct the town clerk to proclaim a holiday. This is the largest petition I have ever received, and I hope that you will be favored with fine weather and have a most successful function.'

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