

Interprovincial

Hickory is being successfully cultivated in some of the school plots in the Masterton district.

It is reported that a Motueka tomato-grower has a crop of 20 tons from 2000 plants set out in the area of a quarter of an acre.

It has been decided by a number of citizens of Wellington to entertain Sir Joseph Ward and the Hon. Dr. Findlay at a banquet on March 1, two days before their departure for England.

A party of nine American tourists are coming to New Zealand by the Corinthic, word to that effect having been received by the Tourist Department. The party will, it is expected, make a complete tour of the Dominion.

The Hon. R. W. Pennefather, K.C., of Perth, and ex-Attorney-General for West Australia, arrived in Auckland by the Maheno from Sydney on Sunday. He has come to New Zealand for the benefit of his health, and has proceeded to Rotorua.

On January 12 the wedding took place at the Brompton Oratory, London, of Miss Brenda Traill Skae, youngest daughter of the late Dr. F. W. A. Skae, M.D., F.R.C.S.E., Inspector-general of Asylums and Hospitals, New Zealand, to Mr. Charles George Ogilvie, of Delvine, Perthshire, and Earlsmount, Keith.

An endeavour (says the *Press*) is being made locally to develop an eel-exporting industry. It is pointed out that frozen mutton, frozen rabbits, and dairy produce have made great successes at Home, and it is thought in some quarters that New Zealand eels, frozen and sent Home, would find a ready market. It is said that a company has been formed, and that Lake Ellesmere is to be the scene of operations.

Owing to the exceptionally dry season, the water in the Wanganni River was lower last week than at any time since the inception of the River Trust. When the river steamer service was established, a zero mark was fixed at Pipiriki, as denoting the lowest depth at which it was reasonable to expect a steamer to reach Pipiriki. Last week the water was 42 inches below that zero mark, yet owing to the improvements made in the river, the steamers are still going to Taumarunui, a distance of 144 miles.

The *Southland News* says, with respect to one of the announcements in the jubilee number, that Mrs. Bonthron, Tweed street, Invercargill, has a grandfather's clock made by the late Mr. George Lumsden's uncle (of Pittenweem, Scotland), by whom he was taught his trade. The clock was brought to Invercargill in 1863 by the late Mr. David Bethune, of Pahia, whose father bought it from Mr. Lumsden in Pittenweem over 80 years ago.

The Government have just purchased another big block of land in South Canterbury for close settlement purposes. The block is one of 3300 acres, a part of the famous Waihao Downs estate, a first selection by a good judge of country, the late Mr. Douglas. The Land Purchase Board has just completed the purchase from Mr. E. Richards, of the area mentioned. It is known as the Serpentine Valley block, and is said to be eminently suited for farm settlement, being limestone country, all ploughable and well watered.

The painters engaged on the re-painting of the Auckland Government House have had (says the correspondent of the *Otago Daily Times*) the unusual experience of having to paint round a swarm of bees, which for several years past have made their home behind a coat-of-arms on the upper part of the front walls of the building. The swarm is a very large one, and the novel hive apparently contains a large quantity of honey. The bees are being left in undisputed possession, but, needless to say, the painters' brushes have not been wielded with any great vigor in the vicinity of the hive.

Sir Joseph Ward, referring to New Zealand's Dred-nought contribution in a speech at the Bluff, said that a sinking fund had been provided so that the vessel would be completely paid for in fifteen years, and the annual cost in the meantime of interest and sinking fund was under £90,000. In reply to his critics he emphasised the great moral effect of the contribution, and pointed out that the only alternative to bearing a share of the cost of the British Navy and ensuring its protection was to build a navy of her own. The cost of that would be ruinous, as we would have to provide right from the jump £10,000,000 in one act, and would then have to pay £1,000,000 in maintenance, and, further, in from fifteen to twenty years the vessels would be obsolete and we would have to begin *de novo*. He dwelt on the unique position of New Zealand as a country of purely European population and on the question of the preservation of race purity, which would be one of particular importance at the Imperial Conference. At this conference and at the next one (four years hence) valuable work could be done in the direction of preserving the European countries (outside parts of the Empire such as India) from an invasion of the Eastern races.

His Excellency the Governor is a great advocate of organisation and co-operation in the farming industry. Addressing the concourse of agriculturists at the Masterton Show on Wednesday, he declared that organisation was one

of the necessities of modern times. Ireland was one of the best examples of a country being retrieved from depression by the establishment of co-operative industries. The same thing was taking place in England. He thought it would be worth the while of New Zealand farmers to look into the British system of co-operation. New Zealand had scattered over the country a number of isolated factories, all doing excellent work. It was a question whether, as time developed, they would not be brought to better use by being under one central organisation.

Miss Alice Power, one of the passengers from Wellington on Monday morning's Napier express, met her death in an extraordinary manner. Accompanied by Miss Moran, a friend, she left Wellington to visit her brother at Napier. They travelled in a second-class carriage having side seats, and there were about twenty passengers. It is fortunate there was not a fuller complement, or a still more serious disaster would have had to be recorded. About an hour after leaving town the train runs along the cliffs, with the sea just below and the towering hillside on the right. Miss Power and her friend sat with their backs to the hill, and when the train was approaching a point near the quarry south of Paekakariki Station, a big piece of rock crashed down the steep bank, knocking in the side of the carriage and killing Miss Power outright. The poor young lady had no warning of her fate, and it is a miracle that her friend was not taken also, for they sat with only a hat-box between them. The boulder, which was afterwards found to weigh 15 cwt, smashed the seat to matchwood, hit the floor, which is made of three layers of heavy wood, and bounded up towards the roof on the far side. Miss Moran escaped, but other passengers were not so fortunate.

Speaking at Ashburton on Monday night Sir Joseph Ward said that during the period he had been Minister of Lands a total of 7,305,766 acres had been opened for settlement, 421,335 acres under the optional tenure, 775,031 acres on renewable lease, 222,680 acres under land for settlement, 5,813,876 acres runs, and 72,844 acres under miscellaneous. The total area of Crown lands at present under survey was 2,608,631 acres, the total unoccupied Crown lands left in the Dominion suitable for occupation was 4,282,281 acres, barren and worthless country totalled 3,802,087 acres, while the area occupied by roads, rivers, and lakes was 2,159,733 acres. There were now 2,600,000 acres under survey in preparation for occupation. During nine months of the year the Government had put 6000 human beings on fresh lands—1500 independent settlers, with their wives and families. There were demands for faster settlement, but if the pace were forced the results would be disastrous. Before twelve months were over there would be a financial crisis, and the poor man with small means would go under. The rate of settlement during the time he had held the portfolio had never been equalled in the history of the country.

In the course of an address at Ashburton on Monday night Sir Joseph Ward said that if an indication of the financial barometer was required it was to be found in the fact that in ten months the Dominion's ordinary revenue had increased as compared with the corresponding ten months of last year by £873,000. This was equal to an increase in twelve months of £1,088,000, as compared with the same period the previous year. Some people told them that this was due to increased taxation, but that was contrary to fact. One of the principal increases was from Customs £360,000, and other sources of revenue showed increases except land and income tax, which showed a decrease of £10,000 or £11,000. But for the readjustment of the Customs tariff in 1907 the people of the Dominion would have paid £715,541 in the year 1909-10 in respect to such articles as currants, raisins, almonds, rice, sugar, tea, and kerosene.

Fifty years is comparatively speaking a long span in the life of a country like New Zealand which has yet to celebrate the centenary of its founding. We are led to make this remark by the receipt of the golden jubilee issue of our contemporary, the *Southland Daily News*, which, under the title of *The Southern News*, made its first bid for public favor on February 16, 1861, and is therefore entitled to a place amongst the oldest newspapers published in this Dominion. At that time Invercargill had attained the age of four years, having been laid off in 1857, when the town consisted of three houses, with a population of forty persons. When our contemporary emerged from the printing press for the first time the number of houses had grown to 210, and the population had increased from 40 to 1000. It was not a large population for a paper to appeal to for support, and the proprietors must have had faith in the prospects of the town and district—a faith which has been fully justified in the progress of recent years. Since its first issue there have been several changes in the proprietary, but a few years ago it became the property of the *Southland News Company, Ltd.*, with the Hon. George Jones, M.L.C., of Oamaru, as governing director. The little weekly of half a century ago has now grown into a live eight-page paper, up-to-date in every respect. The jubilee edition gives a comprehensive historical record of the province since its foundation, and contains numerous reproductions of photographs, of settlers and scenes of early Southland, as well as views of Invercargill and district as it is to-day. The edition is a very valuable contribution to the history of the southern province, and the proprietors are to be congratulated in issuing such an attractive and interesting record of Southland's progress.