

forgotton. In the bitterness of its opposition to Christian schools, the 'Lyttelton Times' condescended to unworthy surmises and groundless charges against Mr Stafford in order to induce the Heathcote electors to trample upon its Roman Catholic fellow colonists, and return men pledged to perpetuate the plunder of people whose only crime is—that they are determined to rear their children in the Christian and Catholic religion, and to do their best to make them loyal and peaceable subjects, and good members of society. To what lengths will not blind prejudice and insensate hate lead men!

In writing thus, we fear that we are not promoting the political interest of Mr STAFFORD. To be thought to be even favorable to justice to Catholics is the worst possible recommendation to almost any New Zealand constituency. The No-Popery cry is as potent in this colony—particularly in the southern provinces—as it ever was in the old country, even in the worst days. It was for this reason that we did not dare to say one word in reference to the recent Dunedin election. We feared lest our opposition to Mr BARTON might have enabled that gentleman to appeal to Protestant prejudices, and thus secure his election beyond the possibility of a doubt. We did not oppose him, therefore, lest we might thereby incur the responsibility of being instrumental in returning him.

We are not quite sure, therefore, that in saying even a few truthful words as to Mr STAFFORD, we are not rather disobliging him than otherwise. But he is a public man, and consequently public property. The liberty, therefore, which we take is our right. It is our business to speak the truth, and when education is concerned, to speak the truth at all hazards. Seeing, therefore, that Mr STAFFORD is one—the foremost one—of our public men who has had the courage and the honesty to declare himself on the side of truth and justice in the Education controversy, it would be both ungrateful and unjust on our part to neglect to make public recognition of his services. What we have written may prove an obstacle to Mr STAFFORD's election elsewhere and on a future occasion; but as evil is not to be done that good may flow from it, so justice is not to be denied because accidentally an injustice may follow. Right reason teaches that honor is to be given where honor is due; and the Catholics of New Zealand have not so many friends that they can afford to ignore such a friend as Mr STAFFORD, at considerable expense to himself, has proved himself to be.

WEEKLY EPITOME.

A FIRE, which at one time threatened to be of a somewhat serious nature, broke out about nine o'clock on Monday morning last, in Cumberland street. It appears it originated on the premises of a Mr Forrester, and quickly extended to the houses adjoining. Mrs Forrester states that shortly after breakfast she lit a fire under the boiler in the kitchen, with the intention of doing some washing, and supposes that a spark must have caught the loose clothes lying about. Having occasion to leave the room, on her return she found it so filled with smoke as to render admittance impossible. She immediately gave the alarm, but before any preventative measures could be taken the back portion of the premises was in flames. The fire bell gave out the alarm, and the brigade in the space of about twelve minutes were upon the spot, but the house was completely gutted before the fire could be got in hand. They however, succeeded after some exertion in arresting its progress, which considering the buildings were all of wood, at one time seemed rather doubtful. Mr Forrester has lost everything, the furniture being all consumed, and though insured in the Norwich Union for £100, he estimates his loss at £200, £20 of which was in cash. The families in the other houses have also lost considerably, their furniture and effects being materially damaged in their hasty removal. The building was owned by Mr Cutten under a lease, which expires in two months, but fortunately a few months since he effected an insurance in the Norwich Union for £300. Great praise is due to the brigade for the manner in which they worked, and it is owing to their exertions that the whole block is not now a mass of ruins.

THE Supreme Court was occupied during the whole of Monday in the hearing of a breach of promise case, in which a Miss Margaret Forrester sued Mr John Darling, engineer, for damages to the extent of £2000. Mr Macassey appeared for the plaintiff, and dilated in rather eloquent terms on the wrongs of his client. Letters from the defendant were read in evidence, and the jury after some deliberation returned a verdict for the plaintiff, but assessing the damages at £250.

THE annual meeting of the Licensing Bench, under the Licensing Act of 1873, was held at the Resident Magistrate's Court, on Tuesday. Mr Balguy occupied the chair, with Messrs. Strode, Fulton, and Mas as Commissioners. The public mustered in unusual force, the approaches to the building being crowded during the entire day. The Chairman in opening the Court stated that it was the first licensing under the new Act of last Session, and that most material alterations had taken place since last year. In future the licensing Bench should consist of a permanent Court, the Resident Magistrate being chairman, with three Commissioners appointed by the Government. That would be a safeguard from,—as it had been alleged, whether truthfully or

not—the Bench being packed, with a view to swaying the decisions either way. It also now lies in the hands of two-thirds of the residents of a district to memorialise against the granting of any license. No license will in future be granted to an unmarried man, the law assuming that hotels are for the convenience of travellers, and that no house can be properly managed unless under the supervision of a matron. A list of persons thrice convicted of drunkenness will be made up by the police, and supplied to licensees, and any licensee supplying liquor to a convicted drunkard would have their license refused at next application. The other restrictions are of an equally stringent nature, and no doubt will be the means of materially decreasing the crime and offences arising from disorderly houses. Several applications for wholesale licenses were favorably received, while others which had been made after the time allotted, were held over for consideration. The Court was occupied during the entire day hearing the applications from Caversham, Blenheim, Portobello, and the suburbs, and in each case the applicants were subjected to a searching investigation as to character, accommodation, &c. On Wednesday, the applications from persons in the city were considered, when several were refused on the grounds that doing only a bar trade, they were not required.

THE following amounts were received for our Holy Father on last Good Friday.—Wanganui, £25; Taranaki, £7; Manawatu Flat, £6; Hokitika, £13 8s; Timaru, £10.

JOHN WILMBURST, late surgeon of the Isles of the South, was brought up for sentence at the Supreme Court, Christchurch, charged with larceny as a bailee of medical comforts during the voyage out. Counsel for the prisoner argued under the 48th section of the Passengers Act, that medical comforts were placed under the charge of the medical officer, to be used at his discretion; therefore, although there might be waste in the case, there could be no larceny. The judge reserved the point, and allowed the prisoner at liberty on his own recognisances in £500, and two sureties of £250.

BEFORE the business of the Supreme Court was called on Tuesday, Mr Barton, as counsel for Patrick Long, charged with murder, said he had issued subpoenas to several residents in Green Island, and had endeavored to obtain from them information with regard to certain matters which he desired to know before he would call them as witnesses. He found a great many were unwilling to give any information, and some on account of certain intimidation which had been brought to bear upon them. He asked the Court, as this was a matter of life and death, to let it be publicly understood that if any attempt were made to intimidate people from giving information, or molest or threaten them for giving such information, or from appearing as witnesses at the trial, the Court would visit such conduct with heavy punishment. His Honor, however, in reply, informed Mr Barton that he could not give expression to an extra-judicial opinion on a matter which was not before him. Mr Barton, said he felt it his duty to make some application to the Court to have persons who refused to give evidence, committed for contempt, and would ask His Honor to make known through the press that witnesses should not withhold any evidence they might be able to give in the matter.

ON Wednesday 15 persons were removed from the Quarantine Island to the Barracks at Caversham. The remaining portion are progressing most favourably, and will be soon ready for removal, only 13 patients being now on the Island.

SOME considerable amusement was created in the Supreme Court on Tuesday, during the hearing of Healy v. Heenan, being an action for £500 damages for alleged slander. The case itself was a dreary and uninteresting one; but it was enlivened by a sharp encounter between the opposing counsel, Messrs Macassey and Barton. The first-named gentleman in cross examining the plaintiff, inquired whether in the event of the case being adverse to him, he was in a position to meet the costs. This, Mr Barton held to be an insinuation that the case had been undertaken by him on speculation, and while indignantly denying that such was the case, yet expressed his determination when returned to Parliament to bring the question of legal costs before the House, and sweep away the snobbery of the Bar. Mr Macassey explained that he had not alluded to Mr Barton in his remark; but hinted that the Supreme Court was hardly the place to unfold his parliamentary programme.

A NEW ZEALAND TEMPERANCE CONFERENCE FOR CATHOLICS.

THE example of the American Catholics in forming Temperance Homes or Hotels for Catholic immigrants, might well be followed in this country—but it is much to be feared, in our small community, the publican element is too strong for that. I have often thought that in our larger towns Catholic working men might form a joint stock hotel or club, into which no intoxicating drink should be admitted—its members need not be total abstainers. It would serve as a resort for Catholics in town or country, where they might get a good cheap meal, and a cheap comfortable bed, with Catholic books and newspapers, and good Catholic company. As a mere money speculation it might pay. Drink and bad books, and bad company, are the bane of Catholics here and every where else. Why don't the "Hibernian Benefit Society" take the matter up? It is in their way. The club should have a Chaplain—as in the clubs for the "upper ten" at home—politics would be quite admissible into such a club, under certain rules. The Reform Club and Carlton, in London, instead of excluding politics, patronise them. Yet good and cheap eating and drinking and lodging are provided at the same time in these clubs. Even in a private house, both politics and religion are allowed to be discussed in a quiet and moderate way. A club or hotel of the sort might be placed under the management of a professional Restaurant-keeper, who might receive a commission on the profits. Cleanliness and cheapness should be the principal things in an institution of the kind. If in time they could raise a billiard-table, it would be a great and innocent attraction.