

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE unwelcome intelligence has reached us from Lyttelton of the arrival of the ship Northampton, with 370 immigrants, amongst whom small-pox had broken out. The vessel was immediately placed in quarantine, and it is to be hoped that every further precaution will be taken to prevent the spread of this dread scourge, and a repetition of the calamities of two years ago.

In view of the opening of the Balclutha line on the 1st proximo, a weekly journal, to be called the 'Clutha Leader' is to make its first appearance on that day, and at that township. The mechanical department will be under the superintendence of the late overseer of the 'Bruce Herald,' and the editorial chair be filled by a gentleman who formerly held a similar position on the same journal.

It will be remembered that the coroner's jury, in Melbourne, which brought in a verdict of wilful murder against Green, charged with causing the death of Mr Reynolds, by explosives, gave as their reason for so doing, that they were thoroughly convinced of his innocence, but that they wished to give him ample opportunity of removing the stigma which has been cast upon him, and clearing himself in the public mind, as he had in theirs. This was looked upon as rather a novel reason for confining—as they alleged—an innocent man to gaol for some months, and a consideration and thoughtfulness for which the object of it would scarcely be thankful. We now learn that the jury which tried the case at the Supreme Court having been unable to agree, have been discharged, and this unfortunate victim of mistaken kindness conducted back to his dungeon, bail for his release being refused, notwithstanding that ten of the jury believed him innocent of the crime. If he be more fortunate when next put upon his trial, and his innocence fairly established, he may in future exclaim with some show of reason, "Save me from my friends."

FROM the Government 'Gazette' of the 28th of May we learn that the number of telegraphic messages from the 1st of January to the 31st of March of the present year has been 203,140 against 141,781 during the corresponding quarter of last year, or a money value of £11,912 against £9744; showing an increase of messages forwarded to the extent of 61,359, and to the revenue of £2197.

A MEETING of the shareholders in the TABLET Newspaper Company, as convened by advertisement, was held in the schoolroom attached to St. Joseph's, on Thursday evening, the 4th inst. In the absence of his Lordship the Bishop, Mr Connor was voted to the chair. The minutes of the previous meeting having been confirmed, the secretary read the balance-sheet for the past year, as passed by the auditors, which was received and adopted. Mr Columb, one of the auditors, expressed his great satisfaction at the flourishing state of affairs which the yearly statement disclosed, and paid a just tribute to the energy, ability and zeal of the secretary. The balance sheet will be found in our advertising columns.

ONCE more the yellow flag floats in our harbor. The steamship Atrato, with 762 immigrants, 159 of whom are for Otago, arrived during Monday, with the measles on board. She has been singularly unfortunate, having at the commencement of the voyage to put into Plymouth for repairs, and during the passage has had thirty-three deaths, although none of the cases are of an infectious nature, but were as follows: six from convulsions from teething; nine from bowel complaint; one from erysipelas, and seventeen from croup. At first when the measles broke out, the patients were kept separate from the rest of the passengers, but after a time they become so numerous that separation became wholly impossible, and the sick were treated in the same compartment as the healthy. On arrival she was placed in the Quarantine Ground, and all the clothes and bedding fumigated in the usual manner.

A FRENCHMAN named Buisson was on Tuesday, at the Resident Magistrate's Court, committed for trial on a charge of attempting to murder his wife by suffocation. It appears that prisoner and his wife had been living on bad terms and been separated for some time past. A reconciliation, however, had lately taken place, and on his promising to treat her more kindly, she returned to live with him. On the night of the 26th ult., on retiring to rest he gave her a glass of porter, and shortly after she felt as if under the influence of chloroform. Later in the night she was awakened by feeling a pricking sensation at the root of her tongue, and found that her husband had hold of her, with his fingers thrust rudely down her throat. After struggling with him for some time, she fell back exhausted, and did not recover consciousness until next morning. Since the occurrence she has been suffering the most acute agony, and Dr Burrows deposed that the injuries were of a most peculiar nature, and such as he had never met with during his entire practice. The prisoner is a shoeblack, having some pretensions to herbal knowledge, and his evident design was either to poison the root of the tongue or cause suffocation. Contrary to practice, the accused was admitted to bail.

A MAN named John Burke, had a narrow escape on Tuesday morning from a terrible death. It appears that he was going home shortly after midnight on Monday, and in passing along Castle street walked on to some reclaimed land, which is being filled up with mud and slush. His struggle to extricate himself being unavailing, his cries for assistance were fortunately heard by some gentlemen connected with the 'Daily Times' Office, just as he had sunk to his chin in the slush. Some sleepers used at the temporary tramway being torn up were improvised as a stage, while others were placed under his arms to prevent his sinking further. The assistance of the police was then invoked, and with some difficulty the man was rescued from his perilous position, and conveyed to the Hospital; but had not timely aid been rendered him, there is no doubt that he would have met a horrible death, for had he not disappeared altogether, the tide would have drowned him by inches.

An entertainment in aid of the Catholic Schools' Fund was given in the Barbadoes street schoolroom, Christchurch, on the 2nd inst.

The attendance was numerous, and an excellent programme was submitted, the first part being devoted to legerdemain, in which a well-known amateur exhibited great proficiency. The remainder of the entertainment was intended to have been a farce by the St. Patrick Amateur Dramatic Club, but a difficulty having arisen to prevent the carrying out of the programme in its integrity, "The Area Bella," by the Spreydon Club, was substituted, all the characters in which were well sustained, the piece creating much amusement, as evinced by the applause bestowed. The Rev. Father Ecuyer, at the conclusion of the entertainment proposed a vote of thanks to the ladies and gentlemen who had given their assistance, to which a hearty response being given, a most enjoyable evening was brought to a close.

A FIRE of a most disastrous character, and which at one time threatened to assume most extensive proportions, occurred about 11 o'clock on Wednesday night in Stafford street. It appears to have originated in the premises of Mr G. F. Reid, forwarding agent, and had it not been for the exertions and promptitude of the Brigade we would doubtless have to chronicle the total destruction of the block. The upper portion of the building was in the occupation of the Mosgiel Woollen Factory, as a wareroom, and we have been informed that the stock of woollen goods was very considerable. Mr Reid was insured in the Norwich Union, £500 on the building; New Zealand, £500 on the stock; South British, £1000 on the stock; Standard, £500 on the stock. Messrs Houghton & Co.'s stock and premises sustained material injury, and at one time it seemed almost impossible that they could be saved. The greatest praise is due to the Brigade, a stream of water being poured into the flames three minutes after the alarm had been rung out.

It appears that after all the irate oratory and virtuous indignation written and expressed against Sir James Fergusson for his autocratic pretensions, His Excellency is not quite so culpable as was imagined, inasmuch as he has, through his secretary, denied the truth of the accusation. In writing to one of the papers, his private secretary says:—"Auckland, June 5, 10 a.m.—I am directed by the Governor to inform you that a paragraph in your paper, May 27, copied from the 'Argus' of May 11, stating that His Excellency 'Has started the idea that all correspondence between the Governments of the colonies should come direct from and to the Governor,' is one unfounded in fact.—FRANCIS A. HARE, Private Secretary."

THE death is reported by telegram from New Plymouth of Captain Henry King, R.M., which took place on Saturday last, at the ripe old age of 92. He was the only surviving representative of the Victory off Cape St Vincent in 1797. Captain King was second lieutenant on board the Sea Horse at the capture of Alexandria, and he also served in the operations on the Potomac in 1814. He became commander in 1844, then Resident Magistrate at New Plymouth, and was gazetted a retired captain in 1852.

A RUMOR has been current during the past few days that a claimant had come forward for the ground on which the London Hotel, Jetty street, is built, as also of the sections adjoining. The report is that a sailor, who is now mate of the brig Craigellachie, many years since purchased some land in the then newly formed township. He thought no more of his purchase, but on a recent visit hearing of the value of property, he bethought of the almost forgotten deeds, which upon investigation proved to be those of the ground above mentioned. It is further asserted that the City Corporation who, it is said, hold possession of the ground, have recognized the genuineness of his claim, and that he has been offered a considerable sum for his bargain. We insert the above rumor, but do not vouch for its reliability.

DURING the fire in Stafford street, a most plucky act was (according to the 'Guardian') performed by a by-stander, said to be the driver of an express, but whose name we did not ascertain. It would appear that late in the day he brought a keg of powder to the store, and being aware of the position in which it was placed, at some risk to himself he entered the premises, then a mass of flames, and rescued the keg from the fire by which it was surrounded. But for this an explosion might have occurred, which would have, in all probability, greatly increased the disaster.

WE wish to remind such of our readers as are members of the the Librarian Society that a meeting of the association will be held in St. Joseph's schoolroom, on Monday evening next, at eight o'clock. As the business is of importance it is hoped as many members will attend as can with convenience do so.

It will be seen by advertisement elsewhere, that the share list of the Colonial Bank of New Zealand will be closed on Monday the 29th inst., and as the shares are rapidly being taken up, intending applicants had better lose no time. We hear that 65,000 shares have been already issued in Otago and Southland.

NEWS IN BRIEF.

A feeling of anxiety is expressed by the 'Grey River Argus' as to the capacity of the colony to absorb the new population at the rate at which it is arriving.

Tenders have been called for by the Government for the construction of one hundred high-sided waggons for the railway.

The Rev. Father McGuinness met with an accident a few days since at Hokitika, fortunately without serious results. A horse upon which the reverend gentleman was riding, slipped upon one of the culverts and fell on its side, Father McGuinness being underneath, but with the exception of a slight abrasion of the cheek, the reverend gentleman otherwise escaped unhurt.

A child fell down a deep well at Lyttelton last week, and the mother besought a man looking on to rescue it, but he not responding quickly she seized the well-rope, and descending, brought the child up in safety.

It is probable that Australia will send a rifle team to England to compete at Wimbledon.