

FAT SHEEP—A very mixed entry and a fair sale. Extra prime wethers brought up to 15s to 19s, freezing quality 13s 9d to 14s, lighter, 13s to 13s 6d, butchers' ewes, 8s to 12s.

FAT LAMBS—These were of better quality, and there was a good demand. Extra prime sold at to 14s, freezers 11s to 13s, lighter down to 9s 6d.

STORE SHEEP—The best yarding of store sheep for some time, and good inquiry. One thousand and ten four and six-tooth wethers brought 12s 6d, 528 do, 13s, 384 four-tooth 12s 10d, 134 13s 7d, 387 two-tooth do 11s 7d, and 222 do 12s 4d. Ewes and lambs (all counted) brought 6s 6d, 8s 8d, 8s 10d, 9s 1d, 10s 2d, 10s 6d, and up to 11s 9d, and hoggets 10s 1d to 10s 6d.

Pigs—The pig market was very flat for all sorts. Baconers brought barely 3d and porkers 3d to 3½d per lb.

WOOL, SKINS, TALLOW, ETC.

Sydney, December 21.—The wool sales for the year closed with a firm tone. The recent advances have been well maintained.

London, December 24.—Hides are in good demand. Sydney, 5½d to 5½d; Queensland, 5½d to 5½d.

Leather and basils are in short supply. There is a strong demand.

DUNEDIN WOOL SALES.

The first wool sale of the season took place in the Agricultural Hall, Dunedin, on Thursday of last week, when there was a large attendance, including several English, American, and Continental buyers. Over 4200 bales were offered, and competition, especially for the finer sorts, was very keen. This was attributed to the fact that the local buyers were anxious to secure the best kinds for the New Zealand mills. The prices showed an advance on those which ruled at recent sales in other centres in the Colony. This was especially the case with merinos and halfbreds. The quality of the wool was equal, if not superior to that of former years, being well-grown and clean. On the whole it is expected, from the samples submitted, that the clips will prove to be the best grown in the Otago province for many years. Compared with the closing rates of last year's Dunedin sales, merinos showed an advance of from 4d to 5d; halfbreds, 3½d to 4d; crossbreds, 2d to 3½d; and three quarterbred long wool, 1½ to 1½d.

Messrs Stronach Bros. and Morris report having held their first sale of the season at the Agricultural Hall on Thursday, 21st inst. Owing to the almost continued broken weather recently experienced having interfered with shearing operations, the catalogues were smaller than usual, the total offerings only reaching 4200 bales. There was a very full attendance of buyers, several new faces being present. English, Continental, and American firms were well represented, together with purchasers for Mosgiel, Roslyn, Oamaru, and Bruce Woollen Mills, and local shippers and fellmongers. Growers and others interested attended in force, and the part of the hall set apart for their accommodation was comfortably filled. Comparing prices with those ruling last season, we find that all descriptions were dearer, the following being the advances obtained:—Greasy half-bred: Super., 4½d; medium, 3½d. Greasy merino: Super., 5d; medium, 4½d. Greasy crossbred, 1½d to 2½d. Greasy Longwools, 1½d to 2d. The best clip submitted by us was on account of the executors of the late James Fulton (Ravenscliffe, Outram), and with this we topped the market up to time of writing, the half-bred bringing the satisfactory figure of 13½d per lb. The crossbred ewe of same clip brought 11½d, the Romney wool to 8½d, and half-bred pieces 10d. We also obtained 13d for halfbred branded 'Craigowan,' and 12½d for halfbred branded 'Cliff.' We had no very good merino forward, the best being branded 'R in Diamond,' which fetched 12½d per lb.

THE WEEK'S DREDGING RETURNS.

During the week ended Tuesday, 26th inst. (says the *Otago Daily Times*), returns were reported from the following 22 dredges, the total yield being 699oz 7dwt 6gr, or an average of over 31oz per dredge:—Junction Electric (Cromwell), 146oz 10dwt; Golden Gate (Island Block), 59oz 11dwt; Hartley and Riley (Cromwell), 57oz 8dwt; Manorburn (Manuherikia), 51oz 10dwt; Electric (Cromwell), 49oz; Empire (Waipori), 120 hours, 41oz; Inch Valley (near Palmerston), 132 hours, 33oz; Enterprise (Alexandra), 94 hours, 28oz 16dwt 18gr, 4 days; Tuapeka (Tuapeka Flat), 122 hours, 26oz 10dwt; Success (Waipori), 127 hours, 26oz 1dwt 6gr; Chicago (Alexandra), 5 days, 25oz 15dwt 6gr; Dunedin (Miller's Flat), 25oz; Molyneux Hydraulic (Alexandra), 21oz; Upper Waipori (Waipori), 18oz 10dwt; Nil Desperandum (Manuherikia), 17oz 15dwt; Evans Flat (Tuapeka), 15oz 13dwt; Jutland Flat (Waipori), 11½ hours, 11oz 10dwt; Sunlight (Beaumont), 140 hours, 11oz 5dwt; Galtee More (Manuherikia), 10oz; Morning Star (Manuherikia), 9oz 7dwt; Chatto Creek (Manuherikia), 3 days, 8oz; Ettrick (Moa Flat), 4 days, 6oz 5dwt. Total, 699oz 7dwt 6gr.

THE EXPORT OF GOLD FROM NEW ZEALAND.

The export of gold for November shows an increase of £40,016, and for the 11 months an increase of £400,000, the total being £1,359,640. It is 22 years since the figures have been so high.

The *W. A. Record* takes the following from a French paper:—At Marseilles, on October 8, four religious of the community of Notre Dame des Missions, embarked per s.s. Armand Behic for the Australasian colonies. Rev. Mothers M. St. Genevieve and M. of the Immaculate Conception for Perth, W.A., Rev. Mothers M. St. Paoome and M. du Saint Suare for Christchurch and Nelson, New Zealand. Thus the number of Religious who have left the Mother-House, Lyons, for the Missions during the past year has amounted to twenty-four.

NEW ZEALAND: GENERAL.

MR. LETHBRIDGE, the former member, and a supporter of the Opposition, has been elected for Rangitikei.

THE election for the four Maori seats took place last week and resulted in the return of the late members.

THE lessee of the new dining room cars on the Government railway between Christchurch and Palmerston North pays a rental of £1092 per annum.

THE Christmas number of our Catholic contemporary, *The Age* Brisbane, is to hand, and a very creditable production it is. It consists of 48 pages of well selected reading matter, original articles, and some very good illustrations.

The total sum subscribed in Christchurch for the widow of Lorraine, the young aeronaut, killed while attempting a parachute descent recently, totalled £333. It has been decided to invest £300 for the benefit of Mrs. Lorraine, to be paid to her quarterly at the rate of £1 per week for six years.

SPEAKING at a social given in his honour the other night in Masterton, Mr. Hogg, M.H.R., said that he believed the Government would still further assist small settlers by relieving them of taxation and placing in on the broad shoulders, which were well able to bear it, of some of those gentlemen who had offered the bribe of a freehold.

MESSRS. Mills, Dick and Company's *Almanac* for 1900 contains a quantity of very useful information in a compact form. The merchant, storekeeper, and farmer—in fact, every householder—will find it a most useful book of reference. The contents cover a large area, and the matters dealt with are, in many cases, more than of provincial interest.

WE have been obliged to hold over several reports of school examinations, etc., which reached us too late for insertion in this issue. In consequence of correspondents not complying with our request that their letters for this issue should reach this office not later than Saturday morning, we have found it necessary to considerably condense communications that came to hand during the Christmas holidays.

MESSRS. Whitcombe and Tombs have published a cheap edition of that dramatic and highly interesting story, *The Miner's Right*, by Rolf Boldrewood. The volume is well printed, the type is clear, and the work is turned out in a very creditable style. To those who have read this stirring tale of Australian life in the gold days, no recommendation is needed; to those who have not, the present is an opportunity of becoming acquainted with a writer who gives a singularly vivid picture of life in Australia in the fifties.

To show the progress of Cheviot, Mr. Seddon quoted the following figures at the banquet given by the Cheviot Settlers' Association:—In 1891 the money orders issued at Cheviot amounted to £326, the money orders paid to £43, and the deposits to £810; in the year 1898-9 the value of money orders issued was £6962, of money orders paid £1599, and amount of deposits was £4448. This, he said, showed that the settlers were men of grit and worthy colonists, who, so far from squandering their money, had put by £4000 odd for a rainy day.

THE Hon. J. G. Ward was sworn in as Colonial Secretary, Minister for Railways, Postmaster-General, Commissioner of Telegraphs, and Minister of Industries and Commerce on Thursday. The Hon. J. Carroll becomes Minister of Native Affairs. The portfolios of Defence, Mines, Justice, and Attorney-General remain open for the present. The Premier will probably take that of Defence on the retirement of the Hon. T. Thompson, which takes place at the end of the year. It is said that the Hon Mr. Cadman will be called to the Upper House, and will retain his position in the Executive Council without a portfolio.

WE (Nelson *Colonist*) learn that a movement, just set on foot within his church, to evince appreciation of the good services of the Very Rev. Dean Mahoney, not merely as pastor of his church, but also as a citizen, has been gladly taken up, not only by members of his church, but by many others who enjoy the privilege of calling the Dean friend and fellow citizen. The occasion it is intended to mark is the completion of the Very Rev. gentleman's twenty-five years' ministration and residence in Nelson; and the proposal at first was to provide the wherewithal to enable the Dean to take a brief rest, and revisit his native land and Europe. We gather that the very rev. gentleman is chary of spending so much time away from his cure as would enable him to take so extensive a tour as was at first thought possible, but his many friends are desirous that he shall, at all events, take a brief rest, and that he shall be afforded an opportunity of visiting other centres after his devotion of a quarter of a century to his local duties. The suggestion has already met with very much favour, and its success is assured. The temporary absence of the very rev. gentleman would undoubtedly occasion regret to many, but the desire to evince esteem would be general, and a hearty welcome home would await the Dean after such a tour as his friends hope might prove beneficial to him.

Monsignor Merry Del Val, a prelate in close and constant attendance on the Pope, was on a short visit to London about the end of October. He is the son of the Spanish Ambassador at the Vatican, and a relative of the Count De Torrez Diaz, a well-known Spanish Catholic in London. He is young in years, but his experience in diplomatic matters is wide, and he has in all probability a brilliant career before him.

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