

PRODUCE.

GRAIN AND PRODUCE MARKETS.

Messrs. Donald Reid and Co. report as follows:—

There was a good attendance of buyers, and values throughout were almost on a level with late quotations.

Oats—During the past week more oats suitable for shippers' requirements have been offering, and the tone of the market is slightly easier. Prime quality meets most demand. Good sound lots are also fairly saleable, but inferior and damaged lines are difficult to quit. We quote: Prime milling, 2s 6½d to 2s 7½d; good to best feed, 2s 5½d to 2s 6½d; inferior and medium, 2s 2d to 2s 4½d per bushel (sacks extra).

Wheat—The market has been in an unsettled state, and so few sales of prime quality are taking place that quotations are only nominal. Medium quality is not in favor, except as fowl wheat, and as more of this is now offering buyers are not so keen. We quote: Prime milling, 4s to 4s 3d; medium, 3s 7d to 3s 10d; good whole fowl wheat, 3s 3d to 3s 6d; damaged, 3s to 3s 3d per bushel (sacks extra).

Potatoes—The market has been fairly well supplied and prices during the week have been steady. We quote: Best Derwents, £4 15s to £5; medium, £4 5s to £4 12s 6d; kidneys, £4 to £4 10s per ton (sacks in).

Chaff—The market is still heavily supplied. Most of the lines offering are of only medium quality, and sales are slow. Prime oaten sheaf is in fair demand at quotations, other sorts are difficult to quit. We quote: Prime oaten sheaf, £1 5s to £1 12s 6d; medium, £3 10s to £4; inferior, £3 to £3 5s per ton (bags extra).

The United Kingdom Drink Bill.

DR. DAWSON BURNS, writing of the annual expenditure of the United Kingdom on intoxicating liquors during the past year as compared with the year 1900, is able to supply some very gratifying statistics. In 1901 the total output of Great Britain and Ireland on drink reached the sum of £158,154,605. In 1900 the outlay was £160,891,718, so that there has been a decrease of about 2½ millions. The decrease, in round numbers, was about 1½ millions on beer, half a million on wine, and something over half a million on spirits. In 1901 the average expenditure per head on liquor in the three kingdoms was £3 16s 3½d. In the previous year it was £3 18s 8d. Comparing the three countries, England spends the most on drink, the average expenditure per head there being £4 0s 8½d. Scotland spends £3 2s 5½d per head on liquor, while Ireland comes third with £2 17s 10½d.

An Old-time Politician.

It was partly on pleasure and partly to renew old friendship that Mr J. P. Armstrong, of this city, paid a visit to the Cromwell and Lawrence districts recently. And as the visit of a man who was intimately connected with the public affairs of the province 40 years ago was not an event of everyday occurrence, several of the local papers had very appreciative notices of our townsman, and recalled many reminiscences of the time when he contested elections in the Mount Ida electorate for a seat in the Provincial Council of Otago and Southland. Our bright contemporary the *Tuapeka Times* had the following:—'Mr J. P. Armstrong, a very old colonist and a well-known and respected resident of Dunedin, was in Lawrence for a few days during the week and during his visit renewed many old-time friendships. Mr Armstrong has in his time been a useful colonist; he has done good service to the State, and has especially rendered valuable service to the interest of land settlement and the working miner, at a time when both the small settler and the working miner had few friends and many powerful interests opposed to them, and needed such able advocacy as a man of Mr Armstrong's wide sympathies and practical experience could render. Mr Armstrong made his advent into active political life about the same time as the late Sir John McKenzie, and was one of his ablest and staunchest supporters in the earlier stages of the long struggle that preceded the Liberal legislation of which we have seen the fruition in our day. As a member of the Provincial Council of Otago and Southland he has a splendid record in the political annals of those days, not only as an able and practical representative of the people, but as a man of high principle and sterling character. Though he has attained the age of 75, Mr Armstrong is physically and mentally as fresh and vigorous as very many men who have not seen half his years.'

The notices in other papers were equally eulogistic regarding his public career in the past, and one and all recalled his labors as the friend of the working miner and the small farmer. In these days when people have short memories the work of those who laid the foundations for the progressive legislation of later times is apt to be forgotten, and so we give a few particulars of the career of one who was in the forefront of the political struggle before our Acting-Premier was out of his teens, and when the Premier was graduating in political life in some Westland borough council. There are two things to which Mr. Armstrong pleads guilty—one is that he is an Irishman, and the other that he is in his 75th year. Were it not for his ready wit and the inimitable manner in which he rolls off those pleasant reminiscences of which he has such an unlimited store, it would be difficult to locate the place of his birth, whilst despite the four and seventy winters that have passed over his head a not over close observer might say he was only on

the shady side of sixty, such is his physical and mental vigor. Mr. Armstrong first saw the light in historic Wexford—that was in 1828, and before he was out of his teens we find him as a partner in a Dublin firm of wholesale druggists and glassmen. The Young Ireland party with Smith O'Brien at its head had no more active member than young Armstrong, who had always great sympathy for the poor and oppressed. The Government of the day with their usual lack of wisdom brought in a Coercion Act as a panacea for the ills of the country. At this juncture the subject of this sketch thought that a sojourn under the folds of the American flag would be more conducive to his comfort than accommodation in Kilmainham, and so for the next two years we find him practising as a dentist in St. Louis and through the State of Illinois. Mr. Armstrong did not take kindly to Uncle Sam or his ways, and after two years in the States he returned to Ireland, the political storm having blown over. Having settled some private business he turned his attention to the Australian colonies, and in 1851 he found himself in Melbourne just about the time that gold was first discovered in Victoria. Although he was never badly smitten with the gold fever still he followed the crowd, and for four or five years did his share in fossicking for the precious metal. Finding he was not numbered among the lucky ones he again took up the practice of his profession, and in 1861—just 41 years ago—he landed in New Zealand. With the exception of a time spent on the West Coast he has been a resident of Dunedin ever since. It might be here mentioned that while in Victoria he had been more than once nominated for a seat in the legislature, but he never persevered in these contests as his business affairs would not permit him to devote the time necessary to legislative duties.

After settling in Dunedin he was elected to the Provincial Council of Otago and Southland for the Mount Ida district, which he represented for some years. On the last occasion on which he contested the seat he was opposed by a leading business man from Dunedin, and although Mr Armstrong did not go near the constituency during the contest, still he was returned by a very large majority, an evidence of the esteem in which he was held by the electors. He was on various occasions strongly pressed to contest a seat for the General Assembly, which then held its sessions in Auckland, but Mr Armstrong did not think that a representative could conscientiously do his duty by occupying a dual position—as member of the Provincial Council and General Assembly. With the abolition of the provinces Mr Armstrong practically retired from public life. At the instance of Sir George Grey, who was then Premier, he contested Collingwood in the Nelson province for a seat in the House of Representatives. A local Greyite also wooed the electors and split the votes, with the result that the opposition candidate was elected.

Although Mr Armstrong has not since that time taken any active part in public affairs still he has been always a strong and consistent supporter of progressive legislation, and his sympathies have ever been with the toiler and the oppressed whether it be in the colonies or in his native land. Like the late Sir John McKenzie, the condition of the tenant farmers in his native land made a deep impression on his mind, and he has at all times vigorously opposed any tendency to create a dual ownership of the land or to reproduce here the evils which a landlord class has created in Scotland or Ireland. In all other matters, too, his sympathies have been with the industrial classes in their demand for shorter hours and better accommodation in workshop and home. Needless to say that he is a staunch Home Ruler, and although he is now one of the last of the Young Ireland party he has never wavered in his principles regarding the right of Ireland to self-government.

The other day (writes the Sydney correspondent of the *Southern Cross*) I visited the deaf and dumb institution at Waratah, conducted by the daughters of St. Dominic. In this beautiful convent I witnessed a wonderful exhibition of deaf-mute education. There were about 100 children in the schoolroom. The first weird impression you get is that of silence, for these children have no voices, and sound is unknown to them, and this impression fills one with melancholy for a time, until it is dispelled by the happy and intelligent faces of the children. The variety of their acquirements and their ready knowledge is not surpassed in any of the schools. One of their instructors is a deaf and dumb nun. The education of the deaf and dumb was, as you know, for a long time considered an impossibility. The Venerable Bede speaks of a deaf mute who was taught by St. John of Beverley towards the close of the seventh century to repeat some words and sentences, but this case was regarded as miraculous. The man who discovered the key to the difficulty was Jerome Cardan, a professor of the University of Padua, and a pensioner of Pope Gregory XIII. Here at Waratah you have the instruction in all its perfection, with pupils from all quarters of Australasia, including your State. Unhappily, too many of our deaf and dumb children are still to be found in the State institutions, where the faith is nearly always perverted. The Catholic institutions should therefore be made well known and generously supported. The Waratah home was founded by Bishop Murray, of Maitland.

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