

Narrative of Events, 1871

January

We regret to have to record the death of the Rev. Dr. Burns, one of the founders of the Province and who has so long been associated with its religious and educational progress.

The buildings at Green Island of the Otago Meat Preserving Co. are in an advanced state and there seems every probability of operations being commenced at an early period.

The General Government has appointed Mr. Thomas Calcutt to negotiate for the purchase of all the land required for the railway between Dunedin and the Clutha.

A meeting, of persons favourable to the reconstruction of the Total Abstinence Society in Dunedin was held at the Athenaeum on the 9th and there were about sixty ladies and gentlemen present. It was resolved that a Society be formed.

Remembering the promise given by the Postmaster-General that the light portion of the Suez mail for Dunedin should be forwarded overland from Hokitika a good many persons expected to receive their letters on Saturday night, and were considerably disappointed at not doing so. We learn from the Christchurch papers, however, that the coach bringing the mail was not to arrive there until Saturday evening, consequently the mail will not reach Dunedin for a day or two yet. Very probably it will, after all, be brought by the "Rangitoto" by which steamer it was brought to Hokitika.

A gang of prisoners will in a few days, be set to work to widen the Kaikorai road at the part winding round the hill side, from near the cemetery York Place, to the toll bar.

The Wesleyan chapel at Balclutha is now nearly finished, and will when completed be an ornament to the township. It is built of brick, and the interior finishing will be of the most elegant and substantial description.

February

Instructions have been issued to the Police officers throughout the province to collect the ballot-papers for the election of a Superintendent, with all possible haste, after the day of polling, as they are made returnable in Dunedin within three days after it. Under ordinary circumstances, it would be absolutely impossible to send the papers to Dunedin from all corners of the province within three days and consequently the officials are required to spare no expense in making the necessary arrangements. Relays of men and horses are accordingly being provided, the men being under instruction to ride at post-haste, while the ferrymen are enjoined to keep awake at their posts in order that the horsemen may be ferried over with all possible speed.

There is every prospect of a woollen factory being established at Mosgiel, East Taieri, before many months have elapsed. Preparations for the erection of the building are already being made, and the machinery is also on its way from Scotland. A practical manager and workmen, such as weavers, etc.. will also be brought out from Scotland.

Mr. J. T. Thomson's model of a machine for utilising the currents of rivers to the purpose of raising water on the river banks, in order to carry on sluicing, supply towns, and provide mill power, was tried at the Water of Leith on Saturday, in the presence of members of the Otago Institute and worked well.

A large number of books have been procured by the Education Board from Britain, for the use of public and school libraries. They consist of works on biography, history, voyages, travels and adventures, science and art, theology, fiction, etc. The books, which number about 600, appear to be judiciously chosen.

An Assembly Ball will be held in St. George's Hall on the 9th inst. Dancing to commence at 9 o'clock. Gentlemen's Tickets 10s; Ladies' Ticket 7s 6d.

March

About six weeks ago six tons of quartz were sent to Melbourne from Mr. Christie's reef, Saddle Hill. Information has just arrived that the crushing has turned out most promising, the result exceeding the most sanguine expectations of the promoters. One lot, consisting of three tons taken at random, yielded at the rate of 13 dwts to the ton.

A fire brigade is in process of formation at Lawrence and already numbers a good many members.

We have received some grapes grown by Mr. William Martin, of Green Island, in his conservatory. They are very fine specimens, being large and well formed, while their flavour is very pleasant, being mellow and more free from acid than is generally the case with grapes grown in this colony.

It is notified that the Provincial Government offices will be closed on St. Patrick's Day.

Work on the first section of the Clutha Railway has begun, at the swampy beach near the Anderson's Bay toll-bar. At present, owing to the nature of the ground only 12 men whose wages, we are informed, are 7s per thy, can be employed.

We are always glad to notice the introduction of labour-saving implements of all kinds. Mr. Davidson, of the Dunedin Standard Iron Works, has recently imported a number of treble and double furrow ploughs, by using which our farmers will be relieved to a certain extent of the very heavy cost of skilled labour, which is one of the chief difficulties with which they have to contend.

In a few days a large gang of prisoners will be set to work forming a road from Mr. Tolmie's, on the Anderson's Bay Road, along the sea beach to Portobello. The new road will be taken right across the head of the bay, so as to make a considerable saving in length on the old circuitous route. The inhabitants of that part of the Peninsula are so anxious for the work to be done that they have offered to provide a small steamer to convey the prisoners to and from the place.

April

The new Telegraph and Post Offices at Hampden have now been taken off the contractors' hands. The building is an elegant Gothic structure, centrally situated in the square. The old Athenaeum Building is to be converted into Chambers for the Dunedin City Council. The tender accepted was that of William Dalziel, for £235.

As more houses are being built in the northern end of the town, so does the necessity for cheap travelling fares become more apparent. The cabs have now found formidable competitors in Gourley's line of omnibuses plying between the Water of Leith and the Imperial Hotel (corner of Princes and Hope Sts.) and which from 8 in the morning till 9 at night start from either end at intervals of twenty minutes the fare for the through journey being 3d, half the price charged by the cabs.

The Oamaru Harbour works have been commenced, a number of men being daily engaged in the manufacture of the concrete blocks for the walls. Three, each of 20 tons, the smallest size which will be used, have already been constructed, and a fourth is in progress.

The Meat Preserving Works at Green Island have been in operation for a fortnight; and meat is now being preserved there at the rate of 400 sheep or 25 head of cattle per diem. Good Friday will be observed as a public holiday. The steamer Wallace, is advertised to carry on this day, excursionists to the Heads and the Maori Kaik and the Golden Age to Macandrew Bay, Portobello and Port Chalmers.

May

The Grocers' Assistants of Dunedin, anxious to curtail their hours of labour, held a meeting to consider what steps should be taken to carry out that object. The assistants desire that grocers will close their shops at 6 instead of 7 o'clock, Saturdays excepted. It is to be hoped that so reasonable a request will be favourably and unanimously responded to.

The population of Invercargill is found by the recent Census to amount to 1960 being a decrease of 46 on the number ascertained by the Census of 1867.

The Volunteer Representatives of Otago in the recent Colonial Rifle Match at Auckland have returned to Dunedin. About a thousand citizens assembled at the Rattray Street wharf to bid them welcome; and all the vessels at the jetties, as well as several of the business establishments of the city were gaily decorated with flags in honour of the occasion.

The number of births registered as having taken place in Dunedin during the month of March was 137, and the deaths 24, the excess of births over deaths being at the rate of 470.83 per cent. The number of marriages registered during the same period was 20.

Mr. Hislop, Secretary to the Education Board, in the course of an interview with the members of the Committee of the Invercargill Athenaeum, stated that in Otago proper 60 public libraries are in operation, and that from £1200 to £1400 has been expended on books within the last twelve months.

The attendance at the Princess Theatre grows worse and worse and it shows considerable enterprise on the part of the management to keep the Theatre open at all under such discouraging circumstances.

June

A smart fore-and-aft schooner of about 50 tons register was launched on Saturday afternoon at the Pelichet Bay jetty, where she has been in course of construction for some time past. She is a remarkably well built vessel, her frame being made of broadleaf, with kowhai beams and oregon pine planking and her decks of Baltic pine. She is also copper-fastened to low-water mark. The ceremony of christening was performed in orthodox style, Mrs. Keith Ramsay breaking a bottle of champagne across the bows, and naming her "Janet Ramsay". She has been built by Messrs. Armour, Campbell, Macdonald and Richmond, for Mr. Cruickshanks of Kakanui and will be engaged in the coasting trade.

Iron-piping, of Dunedin manufacture, is coming into use on the Goldfields as a substitute for wooden fluming, and is said to give universal satisfaction.

The Rev. R. L. Stanford, the Parsonage, Tokomairiro, has room for Two Pupils as Boarders. The next quarter begins July 3rd. Terms £15 per quarter.

We are glad to learn that the Dunedin Chess Club is rapidly increasing in numbers. The enthusiasm displayed at the friendly contests between the members is the best guarantee that they are anxious to improve their play, so that they may be able to cope successfully with any Club in the colony.

The Victorian Dining Rooms, Princes Street, opposite the Immigration Depot, provide Meals 6d; Beds 6d; Board and Residence 14s weekly. Meals at all hours from 6 in the morning.

July

The total cost connected with the opening up and establishment of the settlement at Martin's Bay is shown by a return to the Provincial Council, to be £3878 9s 1 ld the items being as follows:— Survey expenses to March 31st, 1871, £2267 12s 2d; Whitworth's pamphlet, £50; Road from Lake Wakatip to Lake McKerrow, £1560 17s 9d. The population is stated to be only 39.

A meeting of the inhabitants of Riverton, for the purpose of considering the question of forming a Harbour Trust for that port, was held at the Commercial Hotel. A Committee was appointed to obtain the necessary information and report thereon to a future meeting.

The good folks of Lawrence, Naseby and Queenstown have during the last week enjoyed the rare amusement, in New Zealand, of skating. The pools and dams of the miners have been the scene of the sport.

As an evidence of the severity of the frost up country we read that the Otekaike and Marewhenua rivers were frozen over, the ice on the former being so thick that it was crossed by persons on horseback.

A slate quarry has been discovered in the Hampden district. The slate is said to be of the kind used for roofing purposes, of excellent quality, and splits readily.

A whale has been captured by Mr. Ellison's party off Waikouaiti and safely towed in. It is estimated to try out seven tuns of oil.

The quantity of preserved mutton turned out at the establishment at Kakanui is stated to be 1,000,000 lbs, besides a large quantity of tallow. In November next operations on a still more extensive scale will be commenced.

The Dunedin Choral Society, which is to give its opening concert next month now numbers about 130 performing members, more than one half of whom are ladies. There is also a considerable number of honorary members. Since the Society has been formed nearly four months ago, its members have had weekly rehearsals at the Masonic Hall.

August

We understand that the Sir Walter Scott Centenary Committee have completed arrangements for the dinner to be given on the 9th inst. and that nearly all the tickets available have been disposed of. The dinner is for gentlemen only. A ball will be held in the Provincial Council Hall also on the 9th—Tickets: Gentleman's single 15s. Lady's single 7s 6d; to admit Gentleman

and Lady 20s. Arrangements have been made for the removal of fittings in the Hall, the Speakers' and Strangers' galleries being reserved for loungers. In the Library the supper will be laid, and the bar of the refreshment room will be used as a buffet. By the kindness of the Speaker, cloak rooms for ladies and other apartments have been placed at the disposal of the Committee.

It is to be hoped that the bye-law which compels citizens to keep the footpaths in front of their respective premises clean will be put in force, at least in so far as the main streets are concerned.

Gas was lit for the first time at Port Chalmers on Saturday evening, when several of the shops were lighted with it. For a first trial the light was really good. The gas works have been erected by private enterprise.

Provincial Government offices will be closed at 1 p.m. on the 9th in honour of Sir Walter Scott's Centenary. We observe that the drapers are to close their places of business all day.

September

We are glad to hear that an attempt is to be made to establish a Golf Club in Dunedin. Hitherto golfers have been unable to secure a suitable ground near town, but the difficulty has at last been overcome, an excellent "green" having been obtained within half an hour's walk of the Post Office. On Saturday, several gentlemen visited the ground and a foursome was played, affording an excellent afternoon's recreation to those who engaged in it.

A petition from the cabinet-makers and others interested in the promotion of local industries in Dunedin, is about to be forwarded to the House of Representatives. The petition is signed by 642 persons, 47 of whom are cabinetmakers.

A very useful invention, called the "American rubber stamp", has been shown by Mr. J. E. Orton, agent. It is intended for stamping names, addresses, etc., on linen or paper, and is at once efficient and easily used, besides possessing the merit of cheapness. It is superior to metal stamps of this kind in the latter respect, as well as in requiring but slight pressure.

A four-furrow plough, made by Messrs. Reid & Gray, of Oamaru, has for a short time been in use on a farm on the Papakaio Plains in ploughing stubble land and has averaged six acres a day. Six horses are used, and the ploughman sits on a seat such as is used with the reaper, and guides the horses and plough with ease.

The Akatore and Kaitangata districts are at present being prospected for quartz-reefs, but as yet without success.

At Nokomai the Chinese are said to outnumber the Europeans in the proportion of 6 to 1.

October

The amount payable here for immigrants to be brought out to the Province from Britain, was reduced a few months ago to £5, and it was hoped that the number of immigrants would be increased thereby. Up to the present there is no marked difference in the number of applications made by settlers here to bring out their friends from Home.

Another flour mill is about to be erected on the Waiwera river.

Wright Stephenson & Co. report that their horse yards continue glutted with light and inferior stock, which are difficult to move, the only sorts saleable being good draughts and up-standing light harness horses. They quote first-class draughts £50 to £55, medium do £25 to £35, good up-standing hacks and light harness horses £18 to £25, middling do £12 to £15, light and inferior £3 to £6.

A public meeting is to be held at Palmerston to consider the desirability of further testing the copper mine opened on Mr. Bowman's property, Shag Valley. A shaft has already been sunk to a depth of 60 feet and at 35 feet something like 14 per cent of copper to the ton was obtained, and the deeper the shaft is sunk the richer the ore becomes. Capital is said to be the only thing needed to carry the undertaking to a successful result.

The invitation by the City Council of applications from candidates for the office of watchman at the Bell Tower at a salary of £80 per annum, was answered by forty-eight applicants. Many of them were highly recommended; in fact, the Mayor's desk was piled with testimonials. The election was conducted by ballot.

The new bye-law of the City Corporation prohibiting persons from riding or driving round an angle or corner of any street at other than a walking pace, is now in operation.

November

Shearing on Mr. W. Miller's Roxburgh Station has been completed-17,000 sheep were shorn by 12 shearers in less than three weeks, the average number put through being nearly 1,000 per day. The rate paid for shearing was 15s per hundred, and for wool-pressing 2s per bale. The shearers all express themselves highly satisfied with the rate of wages and the treatment they received from Mr. Miller.

The sealing trade on the south-west coast is about to be prosecuted by the little schooner "Nancy" which has arrived at Invercargill from Adelaide.

At the Musical Entertainment given in aid of the North Dunedin School Prize Fund certain youths frequently expressed their appreciation of the entertainment by whistling in the shrillest key. The Chairman, Mr.

E. B. Cargill, ultimately administered a mild reproof by reminding them that whistling was not the most polite way of expressing their feelings on such an occasion.

The fine screw steamer "Ahuriri" left Oamaru for Dunedin at half-past ten on the forenoon of the 22nd, and when off Tumai struck on a sunken rock. The passengers, crew, mails and ship's papers were happily all saved, but the vessel herself is totally lost.

A glue factory has been erected in the Kaikorai Valley, between the Half-way Bush Road and Flexman's tannery, by Mr. Boenicke. Operations have just been commenced, and the factory is now in complete working order.

A project is on foot in Cromwell for constructing wire tramways at the Carrick Range reefs.

December

The Harbour Steam Company's fast boat "Wallace", Capt. Jas. Edie has resumed her Biweekly Trips to and from Oamaru. She leaves from the Dunedin Wharf every Tuesday and Friday at 8 a.m. and from Oamaru Beach every Wednesday and Saturday at 10 a.m. Saloon fare (not including meals) 7s 6d. Steerage do do 5s 0d. These fares include the charge for landing and shipping in the surf boats at Oamaru. First-class Table provided on board. Breakfast at 8.30 am; dinner at 1 p.m.

The gardeners on the banks of the Hokitika river, especially the Chinese, are netting the whitebait in large numbers and using them as manure for their land.

Two steamers and five sailing vessels are employed in the timber-carrying trade on Lake Wakitip, and a third steamer is in course of construction.

In the Mayor's Court John Smith summoned Robert Brown for illegally detaining a turkey. Mr. Bathgate appeared for complainant. Each claimed the bird to be his property. It appeared that when the police gave the bird a trial as to where it would go, it sought the roosting place of the complainant's fowls, and with this and other evidence, which His Worship considered to be in favour of the complainant's view, he ordered that the bird should be restored to complainant, and mulcted defendant in costs.