

Provincial Government in conjunction with that of Southland, so that we may reasonably expect to be in communication, by wire, with the extreme southern point of this island before the expiration of another year.

The scientific researches of Dr. Haast, the Provincial Geologist, have been conducted with considerable success. Another practicable pass to the West Coast has been discovered by him at the south of the Province, and although no payable gold-field was found, very valuable additions have been made to the mineralogical and topographical knowledge of the Province.

The exploration of the remote back country in this province has ever been attended with incredible difficulty, but till within the last year no actual loss of life has occurred. We have at last been called upon to pay our quota to the fearful contribution exacted of the pioneers of civilization from time immemorial. In the early part of May, Mr. Whitecombe, Road Surveyor, after having penetrated to the West Coast from the gorge of the Rakaia, was unfortunately drowned in attempting to cross the River Teremakau, to which imprudent step he was driven by impending starvation, after having suffered and successfully overcome hardships and dangers innumerable. The simple and affecting narrative published by his surviving companion, Jacob Louper, surpasses in melancholy interest the most labored productions of fiction. To the trite but true statement that his loss is universally deplored, may be added the distressing fact that a large family is left to lament their bereavement. Material sympathy has been extended to his widow and children by the Government, as the only means of recognizing the claims of those thus helplessly cast upon the world.

And the mournful record ends not here: another, and, if possible, still more dismal calamity remains to be chronicled. Mr. Charlton Howitt, a near relative of the gentleman whose name is well known through his connection with the Burke and Wills tragedy in Australia, accompanied by two men named Robert Little and Henry Mullis, started on the 27th June from the place where they had been encamped while cutting a track to the Teremakau, and they have never been seen since. It is known that they attempted to cross Lake Brunner in a very small canoe, made by themselves, and, which, not rising more than three inches out of the water, could be easily capsized, and, as neither of them could swim, the cause of their death is beyond dispute. The melancholy news was brought to Christchurch by James Hammett, the only survivor, who, providentially for himself, was selected to remain at the encampment till the return of his ill-fated companions. He appears to have done all in his power to discover their or their remains, but beyond the swag of Howitt, which he found washed ashore, no further traces of their dreadful fate have been gained.

The Chamber of Commerce has removed its place of meeting from Lyttelton to Christchurch. To this association, now becoming an important engine in the direction of public affairs, we owe many beneficial suggestions, which in most instances have been carried out with advantage. The style of this body has been altered to "The Canterbury Chamber of Commerce."

The new Police Force, organized at the close of 1862, under the able superintendence of Commissioner Shearman, has now attained an efficiency, completeness of equipment, and respectability of appearance, unsurpassed in any part of her Majesty's dominions.

The Christchurch Volunteer Fire Brigade has also been remodelled, and although fortunately they have not yet been called upon to prove the excellency of their discipline, there can be no doubt that in case of need great benefit will be derived from their well trained exertions. In connection with this subject may be noted that a Steam Fire Engine has been ordered from England, towards the cost of which £230 has been contributed by the Provincial Government, £250 by the Christchurch City Council, and the balance required to make up a sum of £1,100 will be raised by private contributions.

The "Kowai Coal Company," from the formation of which great things were expected, has, as yet, given no sign, and may be considered to be practically defunct.

A "Philosophical Institute" has also been rather ostentatiously inaugurated, but their proceedings have been conserved with such jealous care, that we are unable to give any account of them here.

A Provincial Investment and Loan Society, called the New Zealand Loan and Trust Company, established under the auspices of a very influential committee, including many of the principal New Zealand settlers resident in England, has commenced operations.

The Bank of New Zealand has made a rapid advance in the amount of its business. According to the figures published, it stands only second to the Union Bank of Australia. The shares of the Bank of New Zealand at the beginning of the year were quoted on the London stock Exchange, and commanded the very high figure of 4 premium. This, on the £5 share, is equal to £180 for £100 stock.

The Bank of New South Wales and the Union Bank of Australia, are doing a highly lucrative business, and all three have established agencies in the outlying towns of the Province. The Bank of Australasia is building extensive premises in Christchurch, and will soon be open for business.

At the close of 1862, the New Zealand Insurance Company published its half-yearly account, showing a very satisfactory state of affairs. The dividend declared was at the rate of 10 per cent., and the prospects of the Company most promising. A considerable amount of business in coasting risks is now done in this Province, and several claims for losses have been met with laudable promptitude.

The apathy evinced in the administration of the affairs of the Church of England, has given place to a more progressive spirit; an agitation for the provision of increased church accommodation, has resulted in the determination to proceed as soon as possible with the erection of the Cathedral in Christchurch, plans for which, by Mr. Gilbert Scott, the well known architect, have been in hand for some time. A subscription list, opened at the close of 1862, showed, within a month of its initiation, the very large guaranteed sum of £11,000; since then the total has been increased very considerably, so that if we have not in a reasonable time a magnificent metropolitan church, the fault will not lay with the people. To relieve the immediate pressure, additional services are being given in the existing churches. The new Music Hall is temporarily appointed a place of worship on Sundays, and steps have been taken to procure two Clergymen from England, in addition to the present establishment at Christchurch.

The Wesleyan Methodists have a numerous connection in this Province,—to provide for their increasing necessities, a new and commodious place of worship, is about to be erected.

Immigration, stimulated by very large sums of money voted for that purpose by the Provincial Council, has been carried on with extraordinary spirit. Towards the close of the year, the almost simultaneous arrival of a number of ships freighted with immigrants, caused considerable embarrassment to the officers charged with their reception; but arrangements have since been made to prevent similar confusion. The Government Commissioners in England have taken the management of the assisted emigration to this Province. Mr. Marshman, the agent, retaining power of selection.

In the absence of official returns, the population of Canterbury at the end of September, may be roughly estimated at 22,000, showing an increase of over 3000 during the present year. As a natural consequence, the statistics of crime show a corresponding increase. The inconvenient crowding of prisoners confined