

new Bill was passed, which tends to abolish as much as possible all central authority in the matter of education, and it supplements the grants in aid of schools by Government with the imposition of a tax of 20s. upon every house in the province. The Bill, after a prolonged discussion, was passed. The chief business before the House, in the early part of the session, was the question of obtaining the guarantee of the General Government for our provincial loans, upon which Mr. Cox, the member for Geraldine, moved a series of resolutions, negating such a course, popular opinion being strongly expressed against it. After considerable discussion, and the rejection by the House of several amendments, the resolutions were carried. A resolution was passed, affirming the desirability of submitting to the General Assembly the necessity of empowering the Provincial Legislature to make laws for assessing and levying rates on lands held under depasturing licenses. A Bill was passed for licensing and regulating Hackney carriages. An Ordinance was passed affecting the Executive Council, by prescribing the number and duties of Officers composing it, and giving the Superintendent power to make the rules by which the business shall be governed. The appointment of the new Officer for Public Works is authorised by this Ordinance. The Ratepayers' Roll Revision Ordinance repeals certain clauses of the Roads District Ordinance; gives power to appoint revising Commissioners, and defines their powers. The Cathedral Square Ordinance authorises the Superintendent to divert a certain highway, and to construct a public highway through a section named in the Ordinance; the land described is to be held by the Superintendent as a cathedral site. An Ordinance making certain provisions for supporting the Volunteer Corps was passed. Certain land in Kaiapoi was leased to Mr. W. C. Beswick upon certain conditions. A measure, which is to be construed as part of the Roads District Ordinance was passed, which enables the Road Boards to rate sheep, and for that purpose fixes the net annual value of sheep at £70 per thousand. In order to increase the efficiency of the Fire Brigade, an Ordinance was passed which legalizes their proceedings at fires, gives them certain powers, and provides regulations for the management and enrolment of the members of the Brigade. The Hospital and Charitable Aid Ordinance makes provision for the management of that Institution, and authorises a rate, not exceeding 6d. in the pound, upon all property liable to be rated for the maintenance of the roads in the Province, for the purposes specified. Another Sheep Ordinance gives the rules to be observed in branding sheep; states how Inspectors are to be appointed; imposes a tax of one pound per thousand; compels the erection of dipping apparatus, and fixes the penalties to which owners are liable for having in their possession scabby sheep. The Roads Ordinance contains clauses constituting Road Boards, defining the mode of appointment of the officers, and the manner in which the accounts shall be kept. It provides for the preparation of a Ratepayers' Roll and the assessment of property. The power to erect toll bars on the roads is given to the Boards, and the schedule gives a list of the different districts. The above is a short outline of the business of the session, which was prorogued by his Honor the Superintendent on Sept. 30th.

The sum set down in the Appropriation Ordinance for the purpose of carrying on the Lyttelton and Christchurch Railway for the year is £91,965, and the sum of £19,357 10s., to be derived from the public revenues of the province, is set apart for the purpose of meeting the expenditure upon the projected Railway and Harbour Works. The sum of £87,215 11s. was also authorised to be allowed the Provincial Treasurer for sums expended in excess of last year's estimates.

The anticipated revenue from Customs and refund from emigrants amount to £72,331; from land sales, £177,000; which, together with the balance in hand from last year (£51,000), makes the total revenue for 1864-5, £300,331.

The repudiation of the Panama mail contract by the General Government excited a feeling of considerable indignation. Two public meetings were held, one on April 11th and the other on April 18th. At the latter Mr. Ward addressed the persons assembled, and the current of popular feeling has since run strongly against the act of the Government. The matter has now been taken up by the General Assembly.

An important public meeting was held in the Town Hall, Christchurch, on Oct. 21st. It was held in order to give the inhabitants an opportunity of expressing their views as to the advisability of calling the General Assembly together. The object of the meeting was frustrated by the fact that in the meanwhile the Assembly had been summoned, but the opportunity was taken advantage of by Mr. Weld, who, in an able speech, stated his views, which were assented to by those present. These views were the absolute acceptance of the Government of the colony in all its branches by the colonists themselves, and the abandonment for the future of any assistance from the mother country in the shape of troops.

Timaru has been agitating for separation, the inhabitants principally grounding their reasons on the idea that their interests are neglected, and that they do not obtain a just participation in the expenditure of the public revenue. However, the agitation is a very limited one, and does not appear, on the whole, to be very seriously entertained.

A noticeable feature in this brief *resumé* of the history of our province is the establishment of Road Boards. These have been already productive of some beneficial results, not altogether unalloyed with evil. The roads, under their supervision, show every prospect of being kept in excellent condition, but it has been found necessary to introduce both rates and toll-bars in order to ensure that favourable condition. The project of establishing these hindrances to free circulation has been very unfavourably received, and in one instance the populace have shown "their ignorant impatience of taxation" by the summary process of forcibly removing the obnoxious impediments. Another form of taxation, equally necessary, and equally repugnant to the feelings of the majority, is the introduction of a house-rate. This is the more unpopular,

because it bears unevenly upon the people, and it will be found, from the fact of the migratory nature of our population, to be a tax very difficult of collection. The legislation on this subject seems to those who hate taxation, and hope to have left it behind in the mother-country, to make the possession of property a crime and the driving of a vehicle an offence punishable by penalty. And the taxes will no doubt produce, at least for a while, the effect of somewhat putting a stop to investments in land, and by so doing will affect our land revenue.

The Railway works are being pushed forward, and have hitherto been most successfully carried on. About 1,772 yards of the tunnel were completed at the beginning of November, leaving 1,086 yards to be yet accomplished; and arrangements are being made to extend railway communication both north and south, the railroads to be called the Great Northern and the Great Southern respectively. The promoters of the branch line between Christchurch and Ferrymead (which was opened on 1st December, 1863) have proved the anticipations formed by them to be correct; the traffic being at the rate of 20,000 tons per annum. The following is the return of traffic for nine months ending September 1, 1864, since the opening—Inwards—Merchandise, 10,669 tons; timber, 872,390 feet; passengers, 22,858½. Outwards—Merchandise, 781½ tons; timber, 6,129 feet; grain, 43,175 bushels; passengers, 29,470; wool, 4,729 bales. Totals—4,729 bales; 11,450½ tons; 878,519 feet; 43,175 bushels grain; 52,320.

The Provincial Telegraph from Port to Christchurch has been a great acquisition; but it having been found desirable that the whole system of telegraphs should be under one direction, our line has been handed over to the General Government. Arrangements are now in the course of being made, by means of which, in the course of a few months, telegraphic communication will be extended on the north to Nelson, and on the south to the Bluff.

There has been a considerable addition to our steam fleet, inter-colonial, inter-provincial, and for the purposes of our own commerce. The Saltwater Creek Navigation Company have started the Waipara, a small but useful boat, which trades between Christchurch and the Creek, and the enterprise of one of our townsmen has given us the little steamer named the Moa, which has already rendered her owners good service.

In connection with the subject of commercial improvements, we may mention the improvements which, in various departments, have taken place in the harbour of Lyttelton. Peacock's Wharf has been elongated, and Norwich Quay so much improved as to be scarcely recognizable by "the oldest inhabitant." The boatmen have been the subject of legislation; by a salutary enactment they are now compelled to take out a license, which will ensure civility and regularity. The boat service has been greatly improved. A pilot and boat and crew have been established on the Sumner bar, and have already been found serviceable for the preservation of life and property. Another token of progress is the erection of a Light-house on Godley Head; this work is being steadily carried on. The iron fittings have arrived, but the work has been somewhat retarded by the wreck of the Catherine, with the material for the foundation of the Light-house on board. In the month of November, there were in the harbour 11,000 tons of shipping, including the largest merchant vessel afloat, the British Empire, the fine steamer the Otago, the Blue Jacket, and a host of barges and small river craft.

The return of the Inspector of Sheep for the year ending June, 1864, shews that the total number of sheep in the province amounted then to 1,300,000. During the year there were imported into the province by sea 12,520; from Nelson, 38,050; and from Otago, 17,850; making a total of 61,420. The scab, which had made so much havoc among the flocks, was steadily decreasing, and from the excellent system of precaution which is now adopted, its total eradication may be reasonably anticipated. The Inspector states that the year has been one of unprecedented fineness, and, from the abundance of grass, the flocks generally are in fine condition.

The shipments of wool were considerably in advance of those of previous years. There were seven ships dispatched from our port last season loaded with 16,931 bales, valued at £400,000.

The City Council of Christchurch have been steadily and successfully carrying out their great work of city improvements: new streets have been formed, and several more laid out. A plan for the drainage of the city has been under their consideration; the expense is roughly estimated at £160,000. Several artesian wells have been sunk in various portions of Christchurch, which have materially tended to obviate one inconvenience which the city has long suffered from, namely, the want of a good supply of water.

A glance at the religious aspect of Canterbury will show that, in the midst of all our exertions for material advancement, we have not been altogether unmindful of higher considerations. Churches and buildings for religious purposes are rising in our midst. The Cathedral is, at length, showing some outward and visible signs of becoming a reality. The Resident Architect has arrived, and the foundation stone has been laid with much ceremony. To remedy the great and increasing want of church accommodation, a new church (to be called the Church of St. John the Evangelist) is being built of stone in Latimer Square; the foundation stone was laid in June last, the whole Masonic body joining in the procession. A parsonage has been built in Christchurch, and one is in the course of erection at Avonside. A large stone parsonage is being built in Lyttelton, at a cost of £2000. The Province has been divided into three rural deaneries, the occupiers being the Rev. H. Jacobs, the Rev. B. W. Dudley, and the Rev. H. Harper. The Wesleyans have completed a new chapel, one of the handsomest stone buildings in New Zealand. The Presbyterians have established another church in Christchurch, under the pastorate of the Rev. George Grant, formerly minister at Akaroa, and are building a large church in Lyttelton. A Presbyterian