

scheme is found to answer well, and, under the auspices of these bodies, the face of the country is gradually assuming a change for the better. A rather amusing contest took place between one Road Board and the constituents. The former had introduced a toll-bar on one of the roads under their control. The inhabitants of the district were violently opposed to this measure, and testified their feelings by small riots, which the obnoxious obstruction was twice demolished. A steady perseverance in their object, however, on the part of the Board, bore down opposition, and the Papanui toll-bar yet flourishes, a monument of the financial genius of the Avon Road Board.

Private enterprise has kept pace with the year. Many very fine places of business have been added to the buildings of the capital and country towns. Coming almost under the same denomination are two new stone churches in Christchurch. The Wesleyan church is a commodious and handsome structure, and credit to the body for whom it has been erected; the other, St. John's, Church of England, is a very pretentious little building, of considerable architectural pretensions, conveniently situated in the eastern centre of the city. The experiment of paid sittings is to be tried here for the first time by the Church of England. It is necessary to add that both these buildings received liberal grants from Government towards the erection.

The first stone of the foundations of the Cathedral at Christchurch was laid with great solemnity on 16th December, 1864, the anniversary of the foundation of the province. The foundations have since been completed under the superintendence of a Resident Architect, brought out from England for that purpose, but at present no signs of further progress appear. This is owing to the general complaint—want of funds.

On December 13, 1864, Christchurch was first lighted with gas, introduced by a private company. Its use has become very general, and we believe it is paying in a commercial point of view.

The Volunteer movement has received an extraordinary impetus. This, we believe, has been caused by judicious action on the part of the Provincial Government and partly by a declaration on the part of the General Government of its intention of calling out the Militia. Many who had insuperable objections to being forced into service therefore preferred the alternative, and became enthusiastic volunteers. A commodious drill-shed has been erected in Christchurch at the expense of the Provincial Government; suitable arms have been provided also by them, and prizes have been offered to stimulate their efficiency. These causes combined have produced a result very satisfactory. We are at present possessed of a Volunteer force, respectable in numbers, equipment, and efficiency, and who seem thoroughly to believe in the importance of the movement. A novel feature in our volunteering has appeared during the past year. Two encampments have been formed at Hillsborough, three miles distant from Christchurch, at which all the Volunteers of the province have been strongly represented, and which have been carried out to their credit, and the satisfaction of everybody concerned.

Immigration has not been so brisk as formerly. In view of the slackness of business, the Government exercised a wise discretion in restricting their operations in this department to a very limited number. It is found also, we imagine, that the time is approaching when this province must become independent of Government aid to swell our population. With the exception of one description of labour, it is a question worthy of consideration whether assisted immigration may not now be abandoned altogether. With our newly-found Goldfields, and those of our neighbours, it seems certain that our wants will be fully supplied without directly taxing our resources for that especial purpose. The exception alluded to is that of female domestics. Although, in this respect, the province is becoming in some measure self-productive, the influx of male population, and their general prosperity, demands a constant supply from without. This has been provided for. An advertisement announces that female domestics, of approved health and character, will be provided with free passages from England to Canterbury. For the information of those likely to avail themselves of this liberality, we may quote the wages obtained here, as published in the colony:—Housemaids, £30 to £35 per annum; cooks, £30 to £45; nursemaids, £25 to £30. Other descriptions of labour are at a corresponding ratio. Married couples (farming) obtain from £60 to £80 per annum, and rations; single men, £50 to £75, with rations; labourers, without rations, 6s to 8s per diem; mechanics, from 8s to 12s per diem. It must, however, be stated that, from various causes, the retail prices of provisions are as high, or perhaps higher, than at any previous time for many years. We quote from published price currents:—Beef, 8d to 1s; mutton, 7d to 10d; pork, 8d to 9d; veal, 9d; butter (fresh), 1s 4d; milk, 2s per gallon; eggs, 1s 6d per dozen; bread, 1s 4 lbs.; potatoes, per cwt., 5s to 6s. These prices are quoted in December; in winter the dairy produce ranges much higher.

A census of the population in New Zealand, taken at the close of last year, gives the following results for Canterbury:—Males, 18,932; females, 13,321; total, 32,253, against 16,040 in 1861. Sheep, 1,567,320; horses, 10,868; cattle, 45,263. There were found to be 342,416 acres of ground fenced, of which 70,000 were under crop. These figures were, of course, before the Goldfield had been populated; and, indeed, everything we have hitherto spoken of relates only to East Canterbury.

In Provincial politics there has not been anything worth noticing, save the excitement caused by the approaching election for Superintendent. There are three candidates now canvassing votes for this office—Mr. Moorhouse, formerly in office, Mr. Travers, and Mr. Lance. The former, from his tried ability and general popularity, seems the favourite. The same Executive has remained in office the whole of last year, with the exception of Mr. Rolleston, who, dissatisfied with the railway policy of the Executive, and having

an opportunity of transferring his services to the General Government, retired in June. He has been replaced as Provincial Secretary by Mr. Edward Jollie, who, like his predecessor, is a youthful politician, this being his introduction to public notice.

A Special Session of the Provincial Council was held from 30th May to 7th June; the business transacted was the sanctioning of the contract with Messrs. Holmes and Co., for the Southern Railway, in so far as the part payment in land was concerned, and the passing sufficient supplies to carry on the Government till the ordinary session, which was postponed till after the rising of the General Assembly. It is proper to notice the retirement of Mr. Charles Bowen from the Speakership—an office which he long held with universal approbation. Mr. John Ollivier, another well-known old servant of the province, was elected unanimously to the vacant chair.

The Council are again in session (end of December, 1865), but the business they are occupied with is so nearly confined to measures connected with the Goldfields, that it is necessary to speak more fully of the latter before proceeding further.

The West Coast of the Middle Island has been long known to be auriferous. The River Buller, in the province of Nelson, has even yielded gold in considerable quantities for some years, but not to a sufficient extent to create any considerable influx of population. It appears that some parties, whose business led them to the coast in the neighbourhood of the mouth of the Teramakau, were so convinced of the gold-bearing character of the district, that an expedition was fitted out specially for the purpose of testing the fact. This was shortly after the discovery of gold in Otago, and at a time when the Canterbury Government were offering a reward of £1000 for the discovery of a payable field in this province. The party sailed, and, after some time, forwarded a sample of gold to Christchurch, said to have been got at the place already mentioned. Their account was received with incredulity, and the reward was not awarded to them; indeed, no active steps were taken by the Government to prove the truth or otherwise of their claim. It is a singular fact that, though Canterbury was so anxious to have a goldfield of her own, yet the reports circulated by this party, and by many succeeding adventurers, were systematically ignored; people really would not believe in the possibility of their wishes being realised; and it must be confessed that the first development of the West Canterbury Goldfields was accomplished by the energy and capital of other provinces. Some explanation of this is to be found in the fact that the West Coast was, before this discovery, almost a *terra incognita*. Various efforts had been made on the part of Government to penetrate thither from the eastward, some of which were attended with eminently disastrous results; and at last it seemed conceded that, with the exception of the route by the water-courses of the Hurunui and Teramakau, no means existed by which communication could be carried on between the coasts. A superficial examination of the country had been made, but this to a very limited extent. The West Coast was believed to present a rock-bound and imperious shore, destitute of harbours, a region of perpetual storms, shunned by mariners, and impenetrable by land; where stupendous cliffs, crowned to their summits with dense forests of a strange vegetation, and washed at their base by fathomless waters, fringed an interior of snow-clad mountains and turbulent rivers, over which reigned a solitude broken only by the undisturbed cries of a thousand unknown birds. The natives inhabiting other parts of the island have weird and awful traditions connected with the West Coast. According to them, demons infest its mysterious solitudes, and vague histories are given of a tribe of wild Maoris, who, almost bereft of all resemblance to human beings, drag out a loathsome existence buried in its recesses. In short, twelve months ago, we knew as little of the country that is now teeming with population, as if it had been thousands of miles distant; and what was known only served to discourage the peaceful and unambitious trader, accustomed to the fertile plains and genial climate of Old Canterbury. It is as well to add here, that the large and increasing commerce that has followed the gold discovery has eluded the grasp of Canterbury merchants, and is now wholly in the hands of immigrants "who know us not;" for, while the old settlers were idly discussing the merits of this or that overland route, and calling on the Government to point out the way in which themselves should be enriched, outsiders poured in goods by sea, notwithstanding the bad character of the coast, and completely shut that market to its legitimate providers.

The first rush took place in January-February to the Greenstone Creek, or Hohonu river, a tributary of the Teramakau; the finds there were of sufficient promise to attract a large number of diggers from the adjacent provinces; and when their researches were rewarded by the discovery of the precious metal at the Waimea, Kanieri, Hokitika, Totara, Wanganui, Mikonui, and numberless nameless streams, the fame of the new diggings produced the usual results, and a flood of immigration from the other colonies set in, which is still pouring in population with extraordinary rapidity. Latterly the coast further to the north has proved very rich in gold, and it is now known that, from the River Grey, north, to Bruce's Bay, south—an extensive district—is one vast goldfield.

The quantity of gold exported from its first discovery to the 30th November, is 187,560 ozs., value about £750,000. The revenue accruing from this source is £23,500; the period over which the export extended was eight months. The population of the goldfields may, in the absence of official returns, be estimated at 30,000, or about the same as the eastern portion of the province possesses, and it is probable that in six months the population will have doubled itself.

As we have before hinted, the importance of the discovery was at first hard to realise. Warned by the delusive character of similar discoveries in neighbouring provinces, the Government left the matter very much to itself. It is true that, slightly moved by the languid stimulants administered by their