

constituents, they expended two or three hundred pounds in improving the Hurunui route, and caused the destitute state of the intervening country to be advertised; but for a long time no other steps were taken. At last, however, it became evident that the case was too urgent to admit of further delay, and reconnoitring parties were sent out in every direction, with the hope that some more favourable route would be found than the one already known. It was at that time supposed that if a dray road could be constructed between the coasts, the whole of the traffic necessary to the new country would flow through that channel. The Government now seemed in earnest, and spared no expense in the requisite direction. An amateur party, even, who have since become historical under the title of the "pic-nic," were subsidized and otherwise assisted in their ardent search for a practicable pass through the dividing range, which, however, in their case, was without result. The Chamber of Commerce also offered a liberal reward, under some restrictions, for the same service, but also without result. The Government were, however, more fortunate; for, after much preliminary examination, it was finally announced that a pass, first discovered by Mr. Arthur Dobson, via the Upper Waimakariri, the Bealey and Otira, had been found to present the most advantageous, or rather the least difficult, line for a dray road across the island. On this determination, the greatest energy was displayed to make it available; and although commenced in the middle of winter, and carried on in an almost inaccessible country, destitute of supplies of any kind, the work has proceeded steadily, and at the time of writing is completed for two-thirds of the distance. It is almost impossible in a brief sketch to give any adequate idea of the difficult nature of this work. The road from Hokitika to Christchurch—the *termini*—is about 160 miles long; for 90 miles of that distance it passes over a succession of lofty mountains, precipitous ravines and dangerous rivers; portions of it are carried through tangled forests and swamps, which present engineering difficulties even more troublesome than the former portion. For 60 miles not a blade of grass is met with; nothing but rocks and hills piled up in inextricable confusion, shingle beds, forest and rivers. And these are not all. Here the traveller finds himself in a region of almost perpetual storms; it is no exaggeration to assert that, nine months out of the year, it rains without cessation, and all the phenomena of the elements are exhibited on a scale rarely witnessed elsewhere.

Another route, by the Rakaia, has also been discovered, and in some quarters was looked upon with much favour. The Government have spent a considerable sum in the endeavour to make it available; but, from more extended experience, it does not seem likely, from its great altitude, to be of much practical use except for driving over stock.

The greatest centre of population at the West Coast is Hokitika, which is situated at the mouth of the river of that name. It has a dangerous bar harbour, where, in its early days, an extraordinary loss of vessels and property took place; as, however, the place has become better known, and the navigation improved, the casualties have almost entirely ceased, and Hokitika at present imports nearly the whole of the supplies for the West Coast: its population is estimated at 7000. Greymouth, on the River Grey, 21 miles north of Hokitika, may be called the northern centre; it is in the midst of very rich diggings, has a bar harbour similar to Hokitika, though of less capacity, and rivals Hokitika in population, which may be put down at 4,500. Waimea, nine miles N.E., Totara, Okarita, Mikonui, and Bruce Bay, south of Hokitika, are also flourishing diggings; in fact, it is harder to say where the ground in this favoured country is not auriferous than the contrary.

This addition to the magnitude of the province threw a sudden burden on the Government, which brings us again to the transactions of the present session of the Provincial Council. We find that the estimated expenditure for the goldfields, in the financial (present) year 1865-6, is £170,392; the estimated receipts are £172,400; and for the other part of the province—Expenditure, £486,099; receipts, £514,795. Total for general account—Expenditure, 656,431; receipts, £687,195. Though these amounts may be modified, the result will not be wide of the figures given.

A rather important proposition will be submitted by the Education Commission, viz., the establishment of high class schools, endowed by Government with waste lands. It is only sought to establish one at present; it is to be in the country, and to be connected with a farm, where farming and agricultural chemistry may be taught. The scheme is looked on with favour, and will probably be brought into operation. The adjustment of the claims of the various sections of the province on the general land fund, and the construction of machinery for the proper government of the new portion of the province, will be the chief employment of the Council the remainder of the session; and let us hope at their next meeting the wise measures passed now will have borne fruit, and tended to produce a healthier state of affairs generally than exists at present.

We have been pleased to watch the gradual opening up of another source of industry in this province—namely, the Canterbury Colliery, on the Kowai. Good and cheap fuel is sure to give an impetus to any new country; and this essential commodity exists, we are assured, in the province, to an extent little dreamed of. The workings of the above-named Colliery are, under the direction of the proprietor, conducted on the most approved principles, being well ventilated, and the water carried off by a drive a little above the water level of the river. The outlying districts already reap the advantage of cheap coal. It has been sold at the pit's mouth during the whole of the present year at twenty shillings per ton. Should the Railway or a Tramway be continued from Rolleston Station, on the Southern line, to the mines, then the price of coal in Christchurch would be reduced one-half or more. Every doubt now being removed as to the existence, capacity, and availability of these mines, time and circumstance will develop the resource to the advantage of the whole community.

The Interprovincial Telegraph has been opened during the year from the Bluff, at the extreme South, to Picton, in Cook's Straits. The first message was received in Christchurch from the Bluff and Dunedin on the 22nd of May, since which time the line has been in good working order. The Northern section, as far as Picton, has only just been opened, and the section which will complete the work to Nelson will most probably be opened in the middle of January.

The construction of a telegraph to the West Coast has been commenced by the Provincial Government. The line is complete and in operation to the Bealey, where a station has been built. From this point the erection of the line is being carried on under considerable difficulties, from the rugged nature of the ground to be traversed, and the number of rivers and creeks which have to be crossed. However, the wire is being rapidly pushed on to Hokitika, and by the time this is in the hands of our readers, Christchurch will be in direct communication with the Goldfields.

THE DISEASED CATTLE ACT.

The powers of the Governor under this Act are now delegated to the Superintendent of Canterbury, and he has, by Proclamation dated November 27th, 1865, declared the Colonies of New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, the Cape of Good Hope, and the Islands of Great Britain and Ireland, to be infected districts. Another proclamation bearing the same date appoints all that portion of the Province of Canterbury to the West of the Dividing Range, to be a quarantine ground under the said Act. Cattle from these infected districts may therefore be landed on the quarantine ground, under the following regulations:—

1. If any person shall import any cattle from either or any of the said infected districts, into the Colony of New Zealand, unless upon quarantine ground, and after having obtained from an Inspector of Cattle a quarantine certificate, he shall be liable to a penalty of fifty pounds for every head of cattle so imported into the Colony of New Zealand.
2. If any person shall land, or cause to be landed, or assist in landing any cattle coming from either of the said infected districts in or upon any part of the Colony of New Zealand, unless upon a quarantine ground, and after having obtained a quarantine certificate, he shall be liable to a penalty of fifty pounds for every head of cattle so landed.
3. It shall be lawful for, and the duty of any Inspector of Cattle, or Police Constable to destroy, or cause to be destroyed, any cattle which shall be imported or landed contrary to these regulations.
4. If any person shall wilfully impede or obstruct any Inspector of Cattle, or any Police Constable acting under the authority of these regulations, every person so offending shall and may be seized and detained by such person so acting as aforesaid, or any person or persons he may call to his assistance, until such offender or offenders can be taken before two Justices of the Peace, and shall be liable to a penalty of fifty pounds.

The Provinces of Otago, Southland, Taranaki, and Auckland are also declared infected districts, and the regulations applying to these are as under:—

1. If any person shall import, drive, or remove, or cause to be imported, driven, or removed, or assist in driving or removing any cattle from either of the said infected districts into the Province of Canterbury, except upon quarantine ground, and the authority of a quarantine certificate, such person shall be liable to penalty of fifty pounds for every head of cattle so imported, driven, or removed.
2. It shall be lawful for any Inspector of Cattle, or Police Constable to destroy, or cause to be destroyed, any cattle which shall pass into this Province from either of the said districts contrary to these regulations.
3. If any person shall wilfully impede or obstruct any Inspector, or any Police Constable acting under the authority of these regulations, every person so offending shall and may be seized and detained by such person so acting as aforesaid, or any person or persons he may call to his assistance, until such offender or offenders can be taken before two Justices of the Peace, and shall be liable to a penalty of fifty pounds.