

that 150 towns had been supplied by this country, and he computed that between the operations of his own company and others from 1000 to 1200 towns were supplied in one day, where the commissioner had stated that meat was not to be found in more than 12 shops. These facts were afterwards confirmed by Mr Gilbert Anderson's experience. The results which the commissioner expected for three years' experience—viz., 48 per cent.—were so manifestly absurd that the committee paid little heed to it. A shop similar to those proposed had been tried, which resulted in a loss of £300 a year to the proprietors. With reference to damage occurring in the transit of meat up the river and for various reasons, Mr Cameron made a recommendation which would involve the Government in considerable cost—viz., the erection of sorting sheds of the dock. In this connection he had subsequently withdrawn some of his public statements regarding the condition in which meat arrived in some cases, and he also made alterations in his evidence in that connection, which he afterwards explained when recalled for that purpose. Whilst Mr Cameron was familiar with the theory in connection with the damage, claims, assessments, arbitration, and insurance, he was unaware of much of what actually went on in practice. If the commissioner's power of initiative and his administrative ability had been equal to his enthusiasm and eloquence, he would probably have impressed some of the level-headed, undemonstrative members of the committee.—(Applause.) The Bank of New Zealand Bill, which was also passed, was an excellent measure, and would no doubt do good to the colony. The Cook Islands Bill also went through—a measure that was necessary, though the Minister in charge of it had not shown that it was. After seeing the islands one really wondered whether it was worth while to secure them. But they had now been secured, and had to be carried on. The Barmains Abolition Bill was also considered. Perhaps it was not desirable to employ barmains, but they were there, and it would not be wise to turn them all out without providing them with some means of employment. They had not been trained to other employments. He suggested to the mover of the bill that, if he wished to carry out his proposal without injury to anyone, he should provide that after the passing of the measure no more barmains should be employed, and he believed that within 10 years the colony would have done away with practically all the barmains, and no hardship would have been placed on anyone. He would like to see some amendment introduced into the Otago Harbour Board Act. At present there was no country representation on the board, and in discussing the matter with someone lately he was told they could have representation if they paid taxation. In reply to that argument he pointed out that it was not only the Dunedin merchants who paid the taxation, because the present charges were also placed on goods which were largely used by settlers in the back country districts. The charges were so heavy, indeed, that they interfered with the trade of Otago, and, as a matter of fact, trade had gone from Port Chalmers in a way that ought to cause those interested in the province of Otago to make strict investigation into the position. He thoroughly believed it was right that the country districts should have representation on the Otago Harbour Board.—(Applause.) The House also passed two very important bills in the Farmers' Mutual Fire Insurance Bill and the State Fire Insurance Bill. The first-named, introduced by Mr Kirkbride, member for Manukau, provided that farmers might mutually insure. The system had been carried on in Canada with great success, and it was claimed the rates were not more than a quarter of those now charged. The State Fire Insurance Bill was a good measure. No doubt the rates charged for many years had been too high. He did not object to reasonable rates, but if many parts of the country the insurance rates on goods were actually in excess of what some firms required to pay in rent. The Government measure would have the tendency to reduce the rates. Indeed, the Premier had stated that already some companies had made concessions. Mr Mackenzie concluded his speech by thanking so many persons for attending his meeting and giving him a most attentive hearing.—(Applause.)

Mr J. McDonald said he was pleased that Mr Mackenzie supported the land laws of the late Sir John McKenzie, the best land laws ever introduced in the colony.

In reply to questions, Mr Mackenzie said he would be in favour of making the old-age pension universal provided it would not break down the pension scheme. He had opposed to the uttermost the abolition of Education Boards, and expressed the opinion that the centralisation of the education administration in Wellington meant the bringing of positions to a common level without any consideration of special circumstances. It was absolutely necessary that an increased allowance should be given to teachers, and also that a superannuation fund for teachers should be established. So far as he was concerned, teachers were a mere incident in the situation. He advocated it in the interests of the rising generation, for at the present time we were not getting young men to enter the service; whilst, on the other hand, men were being retained in the teaching profession when they were long past their period of usefulness. He would like if the practice followed in the London County Council were adopted in New Zealand and a list of the business to be gone on with were circulated among members so that members could inquire beforehand into the pros. and cons. of the matters to be brought up. That would prevent much of the amending of measures that now went on.—(Applause.)

Mr A. Gilmore proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Mackenzie for his address and continued confidence in him as the representative of the district.

Mr W. Loudon seconded the motion, which was carried by acclamation.

A vote of thanks to the chairman concluded the meeting.

utility was undoubted. No good purpose would be served by suggesting an elective Upper House on a restricted franchise of property qualification. Some other acceptable method must be devised. There should be both a qualification for eligibility to the position and for voting, and it had occurred to him that the qualification for Legislative Councils might be as follows: Past and present members of the House of Representatives, mayors of cities and boroughs, chairmen of county councils, education boards, or any representative local bodies, and chairmen of school committees, the qualified electors to be members and ex-members of the House of Representatives, local bodies, and school committees. If some such qualification or modification of qualification were adopted it would secure men in whom the public had by vote shown confidence, and, in addition, would create a valuable impetus to local government. Mr Mackenzie also dealt very fully with the question of education. He called particular attention to the injustice some parents were suffering through schools being closed, or through schools not being opened in some of the country districts. This arose in many cases through the number of childless persons who were located in these places. The miserable allowance provided by Government for a small school, say, of 14 children, was such that no teacher would accept or remain long in the position. Many districts were now so circumstanced. If the same proportion of children was to be found now that pro rata existed with a similar married population of older days there would be quite three times the number of children for school. The consequence of all this was that the fertile were severely punished by reason of the presence of the infertile; and if this sort of thing went on—viz., that no education would be provided where less than 12 or 14 or even 20 children of school age were to be found—then it would soon become an established fact that if people were to go and live in sparsely populated districts they must not have children. Alluding to the campaign now being carried on by those who were so anxious to conserve the lands of this colony to the people, he said that it was a peculiar thing that when he moved in Parliament that steps should be taken by the Government to have from utter destruction all time such valuable lands as Island Block and similar rich country, some of these land reformers had voted against his motion. The Island Block was a property of about 2000 acres. Not only was it about the richest land in New Zealand, but, owing to its splendid situation, the fruit-growing capacity was such that, with railway communication, 10 acres in fruit would keep a family. Yet for the mere gold to be washed out, which, it was asserted, did little more than provide the means of destruction, this splendid property was being washed away. Mr Mackenzie strongly urged the settlers and miners to agitate for representation on the Harbour Board of Otago. He contended that their interests were as great as those of the Dunedin people, and they should have a proportionate voice in the management of the harbour dues, rates, etc. He also explained what had been done regarding the Clutha Flood Relief Fund, and said that owing to the action of Parliament half the balance of the fund—some £240—was saved to the widow who had suffered more than anyone else by that disaster.

Replying to a question regarding the Chinese, the member for Waikouaiti said that whatever might be the outcome of the war in the East and the attitude of the Japanese in the event of victory, he sincerely trusted that no Yellow Agency would ever be threatened here. Wherever the Chinese had come in numbers they were undesirable and demoralising, whilst their methods of living were such as no Briton could adopt. The history of Chinese in the United States was such as to justify the most stringent means being adopted for their exclusion from every British possession. In our own colonies they had worked out much gold-bearing country, which would have furnished employment for Europeans for many years. They were now creeping into trades and occupations, and competing under conditions of living such as no man could keep a family under; and if that sort of thing were to go on one might say good-bye to healthy and reasonable living by our own people. In the Transvaal it seemed clear from what Botha and De la Rey said that white labour could work the mines; and if that were so, why should Chinese be imported simply to swell the huge dividends of the mining syndicates.—(Applause.)

Mr Mackenzie had a pleasant tour throughout his electorate.

THE FATAL TRAMWAY ACCIDENT.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

The inquest in connection with the circumstances surrounding the death of Hans Josephsen Hansen, who was fatally injured by an electric tramcar on Wednesday was held on Thursday afternoon before Mr C. C. Graham, coroner. Mr J. W. Butler was foreman of the jury.

The Sub-inspector represented the police, and Mr W. C. MacGregor watched proceedings on behalf of the corporation, while Mr J. F. Woodhouse appeared for the widow and other relatives.

John McGrath, tent and tarpaulin maker, carrying on business at the corner of Princes and Walker streets, said that deceased was in his employ. Deceased used to go to dinner between 12 and 1 o'clock, and worked on Wednesday morning as usual, leaving for dinner shortly after 12 o'clock. He usually rode a bicycle. On Wednesday deceased seemed to be in his ordinary health and spirits. He was a sober, steady man. About 20 minutes to 1 o'clock witness heard a scream, and, running out of the shop to see what was the matter, saw Hansen, who had just been lifted away from the car. Witness could not say at what rate the tramcars travelled down past his shop—he should say approximately from 12 to 15 miles an hour. To Mr Woodhouse Hansen had been with witness for eight months, and witness knew him before that Hansen had ridden a bicycle, and witness thought, for about three years, and was a very careful rider. Witness heard the tramcar coming—before he heard the scream. He was told that it was a woman who screamed. He should say, judging by the sound of it, that the car was travelling faster than usual. When witness saw the car stopped it was about 60ft south of witness's shop. He did not see the car going; he only went by the sound. To Mr MacGregor: Witness heard the noise of the wheels, but did not hear the gong. He admitted that the best people to judge the speed of the car were those who saw it going. To the Sub-inspector: The car was travelling south. To the Foreman: Before he heard the scream the idea passed through witness's mind that the car was going pretty quick. He frequently took notice of the speed with which cars passed his shop. Possibly the extra noise

was caused by the putting on of the brake. He was not prepared to say it was not.

George Clark, carrier, residing in Leith street, step-son of the deceased, who had identified the body, said deceased resided in Leith street, was 42 years of age, and a married man. His eyesight and hearing were good, and so far as witness knew, he was in his usual health on Wednesday. Deceased had ridden a bicycle for years, and witness knew, having ridden with him, that he was a careful rider. To Mr Woodhouse: Deceased never went on the tram track at all, but kept to the road.

John Sutherland, butcher, employed by Hastie and Co., said about 12.40 he saw Hansen riding down Princes street, going south, and when opposite the Gridiron Hotel, or between that and Courton's, riding on the Gridiron side, he crossed on to the tram line, and the car coming south struck him. The gong was going all the time, even before he got on the line. Hansen was not going fast. If he had had a little more pace he might have got over. The car did not seem to witness to be going faster than usual. It was just past one post that the car caught him, and the car did not reach the next post before it stopped. The street was very quiet at the time. Witness was first attracted by the unusual ringing of the bell. It commenced to ring at the Empire Hotel, on the top of the hill. To Mr Woodhouse: When witness first looked out Hansen was on his right side and the bell was ringing. Witness thought at the time that Hansen would go straight on. To Mr MacGregor: Hansen must have heard the bell. Witness thought it was his place to jump off and lead his bike over the line. The wind was southerly, but not very strong, and witness heard the bell before the car came abreast of the shop. Witness was surprised to see Hansen cross in front, deeming it a dangerous thing to do. Witness was sure the driver of the car could not have pulled up quicker than he did. Witness thought the deceased was alone to blame. He seemed to cross in front of the car as if he didn't take any particular notice. To the Foreman: Witness had never seen Hansen cross in front of a car before.

David Scurr, coachbuilder, said that he was riding his bicycle north yesterday, and saw the accident. He was on the tram line that this tram was coming south on. When about 60 yards from the car witness heard the bell ringing, and crossed to the west side. As he did so the car came over the brow of the hill, and he saw Hansen cross within a yard of the car. The buffer of the car caught the centre of the hind wheel and knocked deceased towards the car, throwing the front of the bicycle on to the line to the right of the car and the man to the left. Deceased grabbed for the front of the car, but didn't catch anything, and went right under. Witness saw the mortorman putting on the brakes. Witness could not tell the pace of the car, being end on, but it seemed to be slower than usual in coming to him. To Mr Woodhouse: The car stopped in about its own length after striking deceased.

To Mr MacGregor: The mortorman could not possibly have done more than he did. Witness was surprised to see deceased cross the line, and said to himself, "Here's an accident." Witness had some experience in cycling, and he has no doubt but that the accident was the result of the carelessness of deceased. Deceased could easily have slowed down. At the time of the accident deceased was past his place of business.

Dr Hopot said deceased was admitted to the Hospital about 1.15 p.m. on the previous day in an unconscious condition, and suffering from symptoms of concussion of the brain. Deceased had several wounds on the head, the largest being on the right temple, and there were also several large contusions on the head. Deceased never recovered consciousness, and died about 8.10 p.m., the cause of death being concussion of the brain.

Archibald McAlauy, tram conductor, stated he was in charge of No. 10 car which ran down deceased. The car left the Post Office, going south, at 12.35. Witness was standing at the back of the car. After passing Stafford street there was a loud ringing of the gong up to Walker street. The mortorman on the car was named Thompson. Witness did not see deceased before the accident, but remembered the car pulling up very suddenly, and when he got off he saw deceased lying beneath, and assisted to take the injured man out. First aid was rendered by some of the bystanders, and a doctor was sent for and the ambulance telephoned for. The car was travelling about 10 miles an hour at the time, at about the usual speed. There was another conductor at the time. To Mr Woodhouse: The mortorman regulated the speed and had control of the brakes. The cars did not travel faster on a down grade than on the level. The gong was ringing loudly, but witness had no idea of the reason. The car seemed to travel about its own length after the brakes were put down. To Mr MacGregor: The mortorman was a very careful driver.

William Edward Alexander, conductor, said he was acting as assistant to the previous witness at the time of the accident. Witness was in front of the car on leaving Stafford street, and saw deceased before he was struck. Deceased was riding south on the left side of the line, on the road. Deceased was ahead of the car when witness first noticed him. Witness saw deceased turn on to the tram line about the junction of Walker and Princes streets, and about six yards in advance of the car. Witness saw the car strike the rear wheel of the bicycle, and deceased was thrown under the car. The brakes were put on immediately deceased turned on to the line. Witness assisted to pull deceased out. The car was travelling at about 10 miles an hour, and the gong was sounding all the way from Stafford street to Walker street, but could not say for what reason. To Mr Woodhouse: Witness could not say how far the bicycle was off the line before it was turned to cross the line.

Francis George Thompson, mortorman in charge of car No. 10, said that when going south from the Post Office he had the car travelling at full speed. At Manse street he shut off the power and checked the car with the hand brake, but, seeing nothing was wanted, he released the brake and allowed the car to run down the grade, without power, at the rate of from 10 to 12 miles an hour. Leaving Manse street, and looking ahead, he saw the line was quite clear, and only a cyclist on the left side of the line, going south, and about 30 yards ahead of the car. Noticing him, witness rang the gong three times with a double tap to attract the cyclist's attention, and, when within about 25 yards of him, witness rang the gong very quickly. The cyclist turned round and looked at the car, but kept on the same course. Witness took it for granted that deceased was going straight on, but kept on ringing the gong. Just in the middle of the Walker street crossing the deceased suddenly swerved to the right, in front of the car. Witness immediately applied the emergency brake, but the head light seemed to strike deceased on the head, and he fell to the ground. The car was pulled up in its own length, about 30ft, when the deceased was found to be under the car. Nothing then could possibly have been done to save deceased. To Mr Woodhouse: Witness had only had about two and a half months' experience as a mortorman on the present line. There were full regulations as to speed on the lines, and half speed was the rule for this part of the line, and was checked as the cars went down the line. When witness first saw deceased he was about three yards to the side of the tram line. He then came in closer, and was about 10ft ahead of the car when he turned to cross.

In summing up the Coroner said it was patent to everyone that there was extreme recklessness on the part of the public in the manner

in which they made use of the tramway lines. It was a matter for public comment how the public aggravated the danger and increased the strain on the motormen by crowding on the lines, thereby creating necessity for continual vigilance, and consequently causing so great a strain on the drivers that it was a wonder some very serious accidents had not happened weeks ago. In the present instance the evidence was very clear that the motorman had used the utmost care in his power, and if any blame was attachable to anyone it was to deceased himself, who, instead of slowing down to allow the car to pass, tried to cross in front, and was instantly knocked down.

The Jury returned the verdict that the deceased had died at Dunedin Hospital on March 30, the cause of death being concussion of the brain, consequently upon his having been accidentally struck by an electric tramcar, no blame being attachable to anyone. The jury also wished to add, though not in the form of a rider, that it desired to express its appreciation of the straightforward and intelligent manner in which the motorman had given his evidence.

SCOTLAND.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

A GREAT SCOTTISH RAILWAY.

EDINBURGH, January 14.

People who are not intimately acquainted with the true state of matters are apt to think that in regard to railways Scotland must take a back seat when compared with England. That this is far from being the case was made manifest in an interesting address upon the North British railway, given by Mr D. Deuchars, superintendent of the line, at the annual soiree of the company's employees in the Edinburgh district. Mr Deuchars stated that during the past 33 years the company had constructed or absorbed no less than 50 lines. One of these—the West Highland—was the longest ever opened in this country on one day. The Forth and Tay bridges were two of the four largest bridges in the world. Last year no less than 50,000 trains passed over the Forth bridge, representing an estimated weight of 15 million tons. On a busy day during the past summer 200 trains crossed the bridge. When the naval base at Rosyth was constructed, even this number would be largely increased. The Waverley station was the largest railway station in the Kingdom, and one of the largest in the world. Last year the number of passengers using it numbered 16 millions, and the total has been steadily rising annually for years. On a single day last summer 1005 trains and 350 light engines made use of the station. In July, 1903, the company had 1440 miles of railway open, and its servants of all grades numbered 19,000. Its capital expenditure reached £64,586,786; and its annual revenue was about 4½ millions sterling. The company has also constructed and owns commodious docks in various places, and has its own steamers running on the Forth, Tay, Clyde, and Irish Sea. It is a pleasure to be able to add that not only has the North British railway grown greatly in size, but of late years it has much improved in punctuality in the running of its trains and in providing better carriages on its principal routes. One blot still remains, and that is the incivility which characterises most of its officials, and which, to my knowledge, costs the company something. I know that good manners are not native to the Scotch; but why should North British officials be more Scotch in this respect than their confreres on the Caledonian and Glasgow and South-Western systems? The Highland railway, however, can give even the North British points in this particular. Perhaps too constant association with "rude Boreas, blustering railer" has corrupted the good manners with which Celts are usually credited. Tourists from New Zealand who visit Scotland may do worse than make a note of these disinterested hints.

A SINKING TOWN.

The busy iron town of Motherwell, in Lanarkshire, is in a very shaky condition owing to its being undermined by coal workings. The Town Hall is rent from top to bottom, and its tower leans to one side. The High School, built not long ago at a cost of £18,000, has its doorways and corridors split and tilted, and stones have occasionally to be removed. In the Ladywell district whole blocks of tenements have had to be pulled down and rebuilt. Even open fields sink in from time to time. At the station the other day a porter was wheeling a laden truck when it suddenly disappeared, and was found to have been engulfed in an old coalpit, over which timbering had been laid. In more than one case the body of an infant has been found in a pasteboard box in these deserted coalpits, which are filled with water and foul gases. It is believed these are but specimens of many similar cases of infanticide. One paper darkly says: "There are many such murder holes in Mid-Lanark." Truly the district must be a good one to live out of.

BOOM IN SCOTTISH FREEMASONRY.

It is so uncommon at the present time to meet with anything which is in a flourishing condition that it may be a pleasant change from the usual tale of struggle and decline to note that the past year was the most prosperous one known in the history of Scottish Freemasonry. The total number of new members was 12,035, which is the highest annual total on record. Charters were granted to 26 new lodges, a number of which were in Australia and South Africa, but none in New Zealand. The totals of the various funds are as follows:—General, £22,265; benevolent, £6822; and annuity, £36,353;—total, £73,140. In addition to these funds the heritable and movable property is valued at £25,400.

OBITUARY RECORD.

Mr Charles L. Orr-Ewing, M.P. for the Ayr Burghs, died at Dunskey House, near Portpatrick, on December 24; aged 43. He was at one time a captain in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. He was very popular in his constituency, which he had represented since 1895. He was also well known as a yachtsman. Nearly six years ago he married Lady Augusta Boyle, eldest daughter of the Earl of Glasgow. After his purchase of the Dunskey Estate some years ago he took an active part in the public affairs of Wigtownshire.

Mr Adam Skirving, of Croycroft, one of the oldest and most popular lairds in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, has died at the age of 85. He was especially enthusiastic in his support of the Volunteer movement, and when it was started he was the first man in the district to enrol. He held many public offices in connection with the business of the Stewartry. He was a grandson of the Adam Skirving who was the author

of the song beginning "Hi, Johnnie Cope," known to every Scotsman.

The Rev. Charles Gordon, of St. Bride's U.F. Church, Douglas, a well-known Lanarkshire minister, died on Christmas Day. He had occupied his charge since 1861. He was taken ill while returning from Canada, where he had been visiting his nephew, the Rev. C. W. Gordon, better known as Ralph Connor, the author of "The Sky Pilot," and died after a fortnight's illness.

A centenarian has passed away at Perth in the person of John Morrison, the oldest showman in Scotland, he having been born at New Cumnock, Ayrshire, on 7th April, 1801. In his young days he was a clown, and performed in that capacity at the coronation celebrations of George IV. In later years he travelled about with shows and amusements of various sorts, especially shooting galleries, so that he became popularly known by the name of "Shooting Johnny." He is survived by nine sons and daughters, 35 grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Mr Hay Downie, an Edinburgh saddler, who has passed away at the age of 86, was a man of ingenious mind. He was the inventor of a rubber horseshoe, the patent for which was purchased from him by a company, which did well out of the transaction. In 1835 he invented the adjustable brake-block for carriages which is now in general use. He retired into private life 10 years ago.

The deaths of the following persons are also announced:—At Kirn, aged 88, Mr Neil Macleod, formerly a sugar refiner at Greenock, and a well-known Free Churchman; Mr William Mitchell, of Achyle, Port of Menteith, one of the best known agriculturists in Central Scotland, and a noted breeder of Clydesdale; Dr S. Lawrence, for over 50 years a respected medical practitioner at Montrose; Jamie Tait, a Yarrow "character," known to all visitors to that locality, aged 74; at Lynturk, Aberdeen, aged 57, the Rev. W. J. B. Moir, late principal of Blythwood Missionary Institute, South Africa.

GENERAL NEWS.

A movement is on foot for the starting of an agricultural college in Aberdeen. A draft scheme has been drawn up, and is at present being circulated among the Town and County Councils in the North of Scotland.

Sir Robert Cranston, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, in addressing a gathering of the poor of the Canongate, said that in all his experience he had never seen a man or boy go to the wall who stuck to total abstinence.

The Duke of Buccleuch has presented the Provost of Dalkeith with a massive gold chain of office, in commemoration of the visit of the King and Queen to Dalkeith House last May.

The annual official return regarding Dundee whaling states that seven vessels were engaged in the business in the Arctic seas. Their total catch comprised 14 black and 79 white whales, 107 walrus, 3229 seals, 187 bears, 10 musk oxen, and 127 fox skins. The yield of oil was 145 tons, and of bone 175cwt. Whalebone has been selling in Dundee at the very high price of £2700 per ton.

At a meeting of the Stirling Town Council, it was stated that the promoters of the Forth and Clyde Ship Canal by the Cambusbarrow and Loch Lomond route would introduce into Parliament in spring a bill conferring on them the necessary power for the carrying out of the undertaking.

The Aberdeen School Board is about to establish a school for the oral instruction of the deaf and dumb. A similar school has been in successful operation at Dundee for a number of years.

The relining of the Moncreiffe railway tunnel, 1225 yards in length, by which Perth is approached from the south, is now completed. The work has occupied nearly two years' time, and has cost about £50,000.

The drapery premises of Messrs Macdonald and Mackenzie, High street, Inverness, have been burned through an escape of gas. The assistants had to flee precipitately, and one of them narrowly escaped preventing the fire from spreading to the rest of the block in which it originated.

The Blairgowrie Town Council is considering a scheme for enlarging the reservoirs in order to provide water power to generate electricity for the lighting of Blairgowrie, Alyth, Couper-Angus, Dunkeld, etc.

The large new hotel erected by the Caledonian Railway Company at its Edinburgh station was opened on December 21. It may be comfortable, but it is certainly, the ugliest building in the city, and it, unfortunately, occupies a very prominent site.

Mr John Dunlop, of Parkhill, who has conferred many benefactions on Arbroath, received the freedom of the burgh on December 23, just after celebrating his 100th birthday. They evidently do not rush matters at Arbroath.

In consequence of the disaster at the Iroquois Theatre, Chicago, the Glasgow Town Council is carrying out a rigid investigation into the theatres and music halls in that city, specially with respect to the means of exit.

Several Scottish counties, and especially East Lothian, are suffering from a plague of rats, which are working havoc among the potatoes and turnips. The papers have published a great many letters on the subject, but no two writers agree as to the best way of dealing with the nuisance.

The Rev. W. H. Jenoure, rector of Barwick, Yeovil, describes a novel sight which may be seen in his parish. A farmer had been feeding his sheep on oats and some of the grain fell on the back of one of the animals. It took root in the wool and sprouted, and the young shoots may be seen growing on its back.

It is not infrequent practice to write "maitai" for the name of the well-known New Zealand timber tree (matai). To clear up all doubt, the question was recently submitted to Mr E. Tregar, the etymologist and Maori scholar, who explained that the two spellings represented distinct words. "Maitai" is a Maori word meaning iron, also washed ashore, while "matai" simply means the well-known timber tree.

