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ALL Descriptions of Brick Work, Concrete, and Drain Work Executed with Despatch.

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SHORTLAND TIMBER MILL, CAN Supply in Any Quantity on the Shortest Notice the following:

BUILDING TIMBER—Best Rimu and Kauri (rough and dressed).

MINING TIMBER—Sawn Timber for shaft work, etc.

LOGS CUT to any sizes with Despatch.

SPECIAL—Cheap line of Palings and Drapery suitable for Fencing.

If you want timber Call on H. H. HOYLE : SHORTLAND Phone 104.

STRAIGHT AT IT.

There is no use of our "beating around the bush." We might as well out with it first as last. We want you to try Chamberlain's Cough Remedy the next time you have a cough or cold. There is no reason so far as we can see why you should not do so. This preparation by its remarkable cures has gained a world-wide reputation, and people everywhere speak of it in the highest terms of praise. Sold everywhere.—Advt.

NOTICE.

THE PRICE OF NEWSPAPERS.

At the recent meeting of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, a resolution was carried that, in view of the extra cost of printing paper during the war, it was desirable to increase the cost of newspapers to the public.

The proprietary of both Auckland dailies, have decided NOT to make the suggested increase.

The Thames Star also, following the Auckland example, will NOT be increased in price.

The Thames Star.

Our Star Motto "With justice to words none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right—let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up this nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and orphan; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace." —PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 1917.

THE FLOOD DAMAGE

While the damage done by the Thames flood is very moderately estimated at £14,000, the Minister of Public Works has promised the sum of £1000 towards making it good. That is merely a drop in the bucket, and so far as real effective aid is concerned is of very little value. It means that the small community of Thames is to be saddled for many years to come with an unexpected debt of £13,000, a burden which they ought not to be expected to carry. There is in hand, or almost so, a sewerage scheme which is to cost the Borough about £23,000. Even that would be easier to bear than a debt due to flood damage, for that money would be spent and circulated in the town, and would represent improvements reflected in increased value of property, while the flood loss is absolute, and is in no wise reproductive. To this has also to be added the proportion of loss that the burgesses will have to carry in respect to the hospital damage, so that altogether a crushing burden would have to be borne for what is euphemistically, but very erroneously, called "an act of God." Some good people will be inclined to say that under the circumstances the sewerage scheme should be dropped. But this is unthinkable. The health of the residents demands that it be gone on with, and even if the ratepayers, when the matter is put to the vote, should decide to turn it down the Department of Public Health can insist upon it being proceeded with. It is therefore unwise to look for relief in that direction. Where it must be sought is from Parliament, and a good case can be made out for a special vote to meet the extraordinary circumstances of the position. This aspect of the case should be strongly represented to Mr. Fraser by an influential deputation when he visits Thames on Friday. The Minister comes here to "view the flood damage." But so much of that has now been cleared away that he will get very little enlightenment from his belated visit. Had he arrived when most of the town was buried beneath several feet of sludge he would have been better able to realise our plight, and to recognise the justice of our claim for extraordinary assistance at a time of most extraordinary calamity. (Since the above was in type telegrams received by the Mayor, have been handed to us for publication, and they appear in another column.)

Now showing by Geo. Cullen and Co., importers, Thames, new autumn and winter goods (ex "Corinthian" and "Arawa"). Latest novelties in all departments.—Advt.

Ladies' Winter Rainproof Coats in all the latest styles and colours; just opened, a fine range of Stylish Tweed Coats for present wear now showing at Courts', The Busy Store.—Advt.

LABOUR'S MISTAKE

The Labour party of New South Wales, whose organisation is the Political Labour League, has expelled from its ranks the best and most capable of its members. In doing this the party has, politically, cut its own throat. The P.L.L. now consists of the least informed, the most hairbrained and irresponsible of those who are enrolled in the ranks of labour. All the men of intellect, of broad mind and balanced judgment, have left it, or have been excommunicated from it. Consequently the remnant commands little or no influence in the country, as the recent election shows. Mr. Hughes, Mr. J. C. Watson, Mr. McGowan, and other acknowledged labour leaders are now outcasts from the Political Labour League. The latter is shorn of its strength by its severance from these political giants. One of them, Mr. McGowan, thus writes: Never from my youth up, have I deserted the old flag of Labour. I have not gone back on one principle nor one pledge. I am as true a Labour man as I ever was, and, happen what may, I shall die true to the principles of a lifetime. But they would crucify me. They have left me stranded with the others. They won't have me. And why? Because I dared, as a loyal and patriotic man, to support the Federal Government in submitting the question of compulsory service to the people—because I dared to help the Government to win the war and save Australia and all those grand democratic principles we have fought for, for ever so many long years. I rejoice that my own sons are to be numbered among Australia's gallant volunteers. Three of my sons were volunteers, and one of them has laid down his life for his country—a glorious death, friends!

CURRENT TOPICS

THE MONTESSORI SYSTEM.

A visit was paid to a Montessori school in London lately by a lady who was greatly interested in all she saw. These schools keep the atmosphere of home life, and there are no formal rows of benches or desks, but little chairs and tables which can be easily moved and grouped. Round the walls were little cupboards and chests, each labelled with the name of a child, and these contained possessions which are kept intact and tidy by the little ones. Plants and flowers stood on a table near one of the windows, and these are grown and cared for by the children. A canary and dourmouse, and silkworms, shared the Montessori life, and helped to create that sense of responsibility which apparently is the corner stone of Montessori education. The sense of touch is developed earlier than that of sight, and writing is arrived at simply and easily by this plan, and older children help the little ones, so that the whole thing is a happy business on both sides. The keynote of the system is freedom, as it was realised that no action that springs from the bending of the will of the weaker to the stronger can be of permanent success.

GERMAN SOLDIERS' RATIONS.

A recent message from The Hague to the London Times stated that the Cologne Gazette announced that the rations for German soldiers in the field were fixed in January as follows: Daily: 125 grammes (4oz.) of rice or vegetables; 300 grammes (10 oz.) of potatoes; 125 grammes (4oz.) of fruit; 15 grammes (½oz.) of coffee, with 6 grammes of substitute; 55 grammes (1 5/8oz.) of butter fat or pork. Monthly: 200 grammes (6 2/3oz.) of cheese; .02 litre (less than an ounce) of syrup; and in very cold weather, one-tenth litre (between three and four ounces, or table-spoonfuls) of alcohol. It should be noted that there is no meat in the ration, which in every respect seems to be miserable fare for a fighting man.

WOMEN POLICE.

At a recent meeting in Auckland of the Women's Christian Temperance Union Mrs. Don made a strong plea in favour of the appointment of women police. "It is recognised on all hands," she said, "that the juvenile depravity is on the increase, and it is patent to all that decay of home life is at the root of the evil. Children roam the streets unattended at all hours of the day and night, and seem to have unlimited freedom to go and come when and where they like." The result of this slackening of restraint had been the growth of a demand for the institution of women police force, to supervise and safeguard the life and honour of these young people. Further, women should be appointed justices of the peace, and be authorised to attend all courts in cases where women and children are concerned. Other countries have already seen the value of women police in preventing by women much minor and juvenile crime.

LOCAL AND GENERAL.

A poultry farmer in South Africa claims to make £2 a day net income from 700 hens and 2,500 young fowls and chickens—all white Leghorns.

Thought for to-day: Think all you speak, but speak not all you think.—Delorem.

A number of Thames territorials went into camp at the Te Aroha race-course to-day, included in which were the majority of the members of the 6th (Hauraki) Regimental Band.

The Dominions' Commission's report, an outline of which was recently published by us, discountenances the emigration of soldiers without adequate capital and training, and urges increased female emigration to redress the balance of the sexes.

On Saturday last we stated that Donald Campbell, of Hikutaia, had met with a slight accident, he having had one of his fingers chopped off. We now learn from his father that the victim of the accident was not Donald, but Douglas Campbell, Wharepoa.

Cases of smoking by very young boys have cropped up recently at the Stratford High School (says the Post). On making enquiries, the headmaster was astounded to find that a boy of eight years of age could purchase cigarettes and tobacco in a shop in Stratford. The headmaster has referred the matter to the sergeant of the police, and it is understood that he tradesman implicated is to be taken before the Magistrate.

An extraordinary letter, written by the Grand Duke Nicholas Michaelovitch, cousin of the Czar, to the Czar in November, has been published. In warning the Czar that intrigues were using the Czarina as an instrument, the writer says: "Often didst thou tell me thou couldst put faith in none. This applies particularly to thy wife, who, loving thee, yet led thee into error, being surrounded by evil-minded intimates." The Grand Duke Nicholas was exiled in December for telling the Czar the truth and denouncing the monk Rasputin.

"How many hours did you say applicant worked?" asked Mr Poynton of a farm manager who was appealing for the exemption of a farm labourer in his employ. "Sixteen hours sometimes" was the reply. "And what wages do you pay him?" asked Mr Poynton. "Thirty shillings a week," "Thirty shillings a week," echoed Mr Poynton. "No wonder you do not wish him to go to the war. Thirty shillings a week! I quite agree with you that he is an invaluable man to you in those circumstances."

Writing to a member of the "Southland Times" literary staff from France on January 9th, Major T. M. Wilkes says:—"Bishop Cleary is with us, and he is great—always round the lines amongst the men, no matter what is coming over." He is a real sport, and liked by all. A soldier was killed alongside him the other day, and the Bishop himself was knocked over by the force of the debris thrown up by the 5.9 shell, but was otherwise uninjured. He tended the dying man who was fortunately unconscious. Many would have been finished with the lines after that; but not so the Bishop. He continues to go round, and no amount of Boche persuasion puts him off his rounds; in fact, he goes where there is most of that commodity because he seems to think he is most needed there."

Dr. John Kerr, who has just died at the age of 86, had many amusing stories to tell of his experiences during 30 years as inspector of Scottish schools. Of the queer specimens of teachers he came across in his early days a good example was a hale old man in a Sutherland village who had held a position as master for 40 years, and for 20 had not had a scholar. His scholars had simply left him, he explained to Dr. Kerr, who was sent to make inquiries; but a little cross-examination revealed the true cause—he was an ardent fisherman, and "I did fish too much," he admitted. "When the river was in the dilt I would often be giving the boys a holiday or two. Oh, yes, I did fish too much, that's the God's truth." One of the greatest improvements Dr. Kerr noted in the educational system during his time was in regard to the teaching of infants. In a "dame's school" in the old days he heard a little girl stumble over the proper names in reading from the Old Testament, whereupon the teacher, probably puzzled herself, remarked, "Just read straight on, Jeannie. Dinna mind how ye misca' them; they're a' deid!"

Housewives greatly appreciate grocers' kindness in giving the "Thinker" notebook free with every 1s package "No Rubbing Laundry Help.—Advt.

Now showing by Geo. Cullen and Co., importers, Thames, new autumn and winter goods (ex "Corinthian" and "Arawa"). Latest novelties in all departments.—Advt.

Winter Noreties in all departments now showing at Courts', The Busy Store.—Advt.

Leave your advertisements at W. Coad's Pollen Street, up to 2 p.m. daily, for insertion in Thames Star.

PUBLIC OPINION.

(Under this head we invite discussion upon topics of interest. It must however be distinctly understood that the opinions expressed are those of our correspondents only, with which we are not necessarily identified.)

BOROUGH AFFAIRS.

(To the Editor.)

Sir,—In the past I have refrained from replying to criticism under a non de plume, as I consider people who have not the courage to make known their identity cannot have any real and true desire to assist the interests of the ratepayers. In the present instance, however, I have decided, in view of the seriousness of the allegations made, to furnish a brief statement to the public, to prevent their being misled by "A Ratepayer." The overdraft of £7604 15s 10d as referred to by "A Ratepayer" was evidently obtained from the press, which omitted a supplementary statement of rate collections of £3095 13s 6d and flood expenditure £1410 10s 11d, and general expenses £254 13s 7d as supplied to the Government. It will therefore be seen that at the time mentioned the overdraft was £6174 6s 10d, which included flood expenses £1410 10s 11d, and electricity overdraft £1599 15s 5d. Had it not been for flood expenses the District Fund overdraft, excluding electricity account, would have been £3164 6s 6d. For "A Ratepayer's" information, under instructions from the Council, I submitted a report on the Borough finances as at 31st March, 1915, and it was fully explained therein the creation of the then District Fund overdraft of £3,534 16s 11d. This report was at the time published in the Thames Star, and I shall be pleased to furnish these particulars to anyone desiring them. With reference to "A Ratepayer's" remark regarding my pointing out a way whereby the Council could proceed with the sewerage scheme without taking a vote of ratepayers, I wish to state that the newspaper report was not according to the Council's procedure, as will be seen by the following letter of 9th February, 1917, sent to the Health Department, Auckland: "In connection with the consideration of the proposed sewerage scheme for Thames, I would be much obliged if you would ascertain from Dr. Makgill whether there would be any difficulty in raising a loan from the Government for the undertaking, and probable rate of interest that would be charged. The Borough and County engineers' schemes have been adopted, and they are now engaged in preparing an estimate of the proportionate cost of construction, and as soon as this information is available, a proposal will be submitted to the ratepayers. The information now asked for is required to be embodied in the aforesaid proposal. His Worship the Mayor understood from Dr. Makgill that the money could probably be obtained from the Government at from 4 1/2 to 5 per cent. The ratepayers will naturally expect to have something definite as regards the rate of interest for loan, and no doubt this will have a great influence with their vote on the proposal. The Council will be meeting on Thursday next to consider the estimates submitted by the Borough engineer, and it would be of great assistance to have some indication as to the probability of the Government advancing the money, and rate of interest. If time would not be sufficient to allow sending a letter, would you kindly ask Dr. Makgill to wire, as the information is desired for the meeting." At the meeting referred to, a telegraphic reply to the above was under consideration. It referred to advances under section 69 of "The Public Health Act," and on being requested by the Council, I read out the said section, which is made up of a, b, c sub-sections. Subsection b in addition to other matters, states that money may be borrowed without obtaining the consent of the ratepayers. This remark did not emanate from me, but was part of my reading of the aforesaid Statute. The Council's letter to the Health Department should fully convince the ratepayers that there has always been the intention of placing any sewerage proposal before them, as the Council realises that it is for the ratepayers to decide such a question, and before taking a poll that the fullest data should be embodied in the proposal. During my term of office as town clerk, I have never in any way sought to influence the policy of the Council. This I know will be readily borne out by councillors and ex-councillors. I hope that "A Ratepayer" will make himself conversant with facts before he again offers criticism on subjects which he evidently does not understand, and in future if he has a grievance, to kindly ascertain the exact facts of the case from records in my office.—I am, etc., A. CHAPMAN.

March 27, 1917.

(When Mr Chapman writes that our report was "not according to the Council's procedure" he appears to imply that our report was inaccurate. We however maintain the accuracy of the report. Our issue of February 16th says: "The town clerk quoted from the Act, etc."—Editor Star.)

Now showing by Geo. Cullen and Co., importers, Thames, new autumn and winter goods (ex "Corinthian" and "Arawa"). Latest novelties in all departments.—Advt.

THE FLOOD DAMAGE

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE.

MINISTERIAL VISIT.

The following telegrams have been received by the Mayor from the Ministers indicated:—

"Referring to the deputation from the Thames Borough Council which waited on me on the 21st March, I now have pleasure in informing you that Cabinet has agreed to the sum of £1000 being advanced at once, pending a further report, and any subsequent arrangements, the expenditure to be subject to the approval of the Minister of Public Works.—J. Allen."

"Cabinet has requested me to visit Thames and report to it on the damage done by the flood. I hope to reach there on Friday morning from Paeroa. In the meantime Cabinet has agreed to pay £1000 for further work beyond what you have already done. The value of such work as you have done up to £1000 will be treated as your contribution to this fund for pound.—W. Fraser, Minister for Public Works."

ARE YOU A MASON?

To-morrow night at the King's Theatre the Royal Dramatic Comedy Company present the screaming farce comedy, "Are You a Mason?" This merry making play has lost little of its old time popularity, and that it is interpreted by a capable company is evidenced by the remarkable success it has been meeting with in the Dominion since the company arrived from Australia some six weeks ago. The initiated and uninitiated alike in Freemasonry have gone to see this clever English farce comedy. It affords two and a half hours of enjoyment, and Thames is being afforded an opportunity of seeing an established successful play, interpreted by a combination of English and Australian artists at popular prices. The principals of the company include:—Misses Midge Surtees, Margaret Linden, Beatrice Esmond, Mildred Carlton, Mobs Gower, Ruby Guy, and Messrs Ronald Riley, Colville Dunn, Gerald Harcourt, C. B. Thoby, Harcourt Hare, Fred Coape, George Henlett, and Reginald Collins. The box plan is now open at the King's Theatre.

QUEEN'S THEATRE

Owing to the arrangement for three night's screening of the great motion picture masterpiece, "The Divinity of Motherhood," the Metro programme at the Queen's to-night is positively for one night only. The star is "A Million a Minute," with Francis X. Bushman and Beverley Bayne in the lead, and the programme includes a gazette, Metro traveltogue, and comedy. A picture play featuring Francis X. Bushman and Beverley Bayne can always be relied upon to maintain the high standard of the Metro wonderplay. A wonderful display of fashionable gowns is given in the big Embassy ball in Paris. This scene is extremely well handled, and is probably one of the largest sets ever used for one scene. A peculiar sense of business and splendour is conveyed, the picture being a veritable triumph of the art. Thursday at 3 and 8 p.m. the wonderful sermon picture, "The Divinity of Motherhood," commences its season at the Queen's, and lady patrons especially are requested to avoid the crowds at night and attend the day sessions.

Mr Arthur Neville Chamberlain, Director of National Service, is only the half brother of the Secretary of State for India. Mr Austen Chamberlain's mother, who lived only two years after her marriage, had been Miss Harriet Kenrick; and after six years as a widow Mr Joseph Chamberlain married another Miss Kenrick, a cousin of his first wife, who became the mother of Mr Neville Chamberlain. When Mr Neville Chamberlain returned to Birmingham from the West Indies he engaged in one of the industries peculiar to that place, and can hardly be said to have been at first a public man at all, notwithstanding the illustrious name he bore. His labours, outside business, lay in the direction of social reform, and in "thinking out" the problems of Capital and Labour, one fruit of which was seen in his speech of welcome, which was a good deal of a lecture, to the Trade Union Congress in Birmingham last autumn. He has made a capital Lord Mayor, and his establishment of the municipal bank in Birmingham shows that he is a man of ideas, and is prepared to act on them. Moreover, he has all the charm of manner that distinguished his father, and none of the latter's acerbity towards opponents.

"New days are on your track."—Bernal.

"Though you suffer from a cold or sore throat to-day you will begin to feel better to-morrow if you start to take Baxter's Lung Preserver at once. This famous tested remedy gives new health to those who have weak lungs or are run down. It is a tonic medicine as well as a lung preserver. Splendid for young and old. Pleasant to take, and every dose benefits. Prove its goodness and reliability NOW. Ask your Chemist or Store-keeper for a big 1s 10d bottle, but be sure you obtain "Baxter's."—Advt.

TE AROHA SPORTS

The monster sports under the auspices of the Te Aroha District Cycling Club, to be held at Te Aroha on Easter Monday, promises to be quite the biggest thing ever held in that locality. Already arrangements are well in hand, and the committee is working hard to ensure success. Parties wishing to spend a pleasant day cannot do better than pay Te Aroha a visit on Easter Monday. The sports committee have arranged a large and varied programme including cycling, running, piping and dancing, while there will be competitions and side-shows galore. Programmes with full details of the events may be had on application. Entries for all the principal events close on Saturday next, March 31st. Special trains will be running to and from all parts. The special return train to Thames leaves Te Aroha at 5.50 p.m., and arrives at Thames at 8 p.m. A refreshment booth will be on the ground and hot water will be provided free. The Te Aroha Municipal Band will be in attendance. This is a newly formed Club, but with the energetic committee working untiringly the sports should prove a great success.

LETTER-SORTERS' TRIALS

WHERE THE PUBLIC FAILS.

Every adult in the Dominion uses the Post Office, but the great majority have the basest ideas regarding the methods by which millions of articles annually are sorted, transmitted, and delivered. It is probable most people think the business of sorting letters is very easy. The average man most likely imagines "any fool can sort letters." This is a mistake. A satisfactory sorter must have a good memory, and requires months of training. Only experienced men can be entrusted with primary sorting, because before they can undertake that duty they must have memorised the post offices throughout the Dominion as well as those persons who receive their correspondence through private boxes.

The private box sorting imposes a severe tax on the memory. The sorters are expected to memorise thousands of names and to remember in which boxes correspondence for each has to be placed. The task is, of course, impossible.

Letters for private box holders are in the process of primary sorting mis-sorted to carriers and sorting delay. Others are placed in the wrong boxes, and this gives rise to numerous complaints. Unfortunately, the strain on the memories of the men leads to mistakes in other directions. The difficulty would disappear if private box holders would arrange to have the number of the box added to the address of all articles. In Johannesburg, South Africa, there are over 7500 box holders, but that no letter is placed in a private box unless it bears the number of the box. The Postal Department has now come to the conclusion that the same rule will have to apply at all the principal Post Offices in New Zealand, for, as it is, sorters are being asked to do far more than is reasonable.—Dominion.

OUR ADVERTISERS

It is children's show week at Gahagan's. Everything pretty and dainty is showing this week for the infants, wee tots, and maids.

Tenders for removal of battery, cyanide plant, mining plant, huts, etc., are invited by the Zeehan Consolidated Co. Full particulars are given in the advertisement on page 1.

The Women's National Reserve gives notice in an advertisement on page 1, that the garments and other comforts made by the members and friends will be on view at St. George's Sunday schoolroom to-morrow afternoon from 2 to 4. Afternoon tea will be served by the ladies. The public are cordially invited. Returned men and those on leave heartily welcomed.

Favoured with instructions the N.Z. Loan and Mercantile Agency Co. will sell by public auction on the 1st of April, Maramara, on Monday, April 2nd, at noon, in the estate of the late Mrs Elizabeth Foote, the whole of the live and dead stock, including 25 choice dairy cows, 25 2 1/2-year-old heifers, 25 2 1/2-year-old steers, 15 strong calves, 5 working horses. Also household furniture and effects, including piano by Hanke. Luncheon will be provided.

The use of burning lens to generate fire was known to the ancient Greeks.

Parliament will probably open about the end of June. The Right Hon. W. F. Massey and Sir Joseph Ward would probably not return much before the end of June.

The second number of "Australia in the Great War" is to hand. It is the story of the war told in pictures, and these illustrations are excellent, and are a graphic representation of the doings at the front.

Just landed a fine assortment of sample costumes, made up in the fashionable Gabardine, and pure indigo navy worsted serge. No two styles alike. This is a very special line and well worth your inspection. Now showing at Gahagan's (late Wylie's).—Advt.