

THE Public Offices will be closed to-day and until Tuesday, the 26th December, inclusive, according to official notification in the Gazette.

THE Queensland Cricket Association have received a telegram from Mr. Wardell, secretary of the Melbourne Cricket Club, as follows:—"Team will leave Sydney definitely on the 30th January. Suggest playing in Maryborough on the 3rd and 5th February, and in Brisbane on the 8th, 9th, and 10th, as teams would have to leave on Monday, the 12th, to keep engagements in Sydney."

THE many friends of Mr. Thomas Curphey will regret to hear of his death. He left the colony a few months ago for the old country for the benefit of his health, but died after reaching his destination. Mr. Curphey was for many years a Custom House officer in Brisbane, and had, by sheer industry and attention to his duties, come to the front rank among the officials in that department. He was in the habit of making the voyage to England, and a list of Commissioners of the Supreme Court of Queensland for taking affidavits is published in the Gazette.

WE have received a sample of English potatoes and onions grown by Mr. J. Welch, of Ellangowan, in the Upper Warrego district, and which furnish proof as to the growing capabilities of that portion of Queensland for European vegetables. In the box accompanying them was a sample of the soil in which they were grown, which consists of a light sandy loam, moderately rich in humus, and about average fertility but nothing extra. The potatoes, five in number, are large and clean grown, and to all appearance fine and sound, a really excellent sample; the onions are of fair size, well ripened and good, and both speak volumes in favour of the locality where they were produced. Land that can produce crops of this quality is certainly qualified to produce any other crop, and with anything like a fair season the Warrego lands could be turned to good advantage by proper cultivation. Our readers who would like to see these Warrego productions can do so by viewing the window of Mr. M. Rigby, seedman and fruiterer, Queen-street.

A CORRESPONDENT writes to the Queensland Times:—"After the departure of Mr. Griffith and party on Saturday last, a number of the few farmers who had met to welcome the honourable gentleman remained to talk over the general prospects of the district, and to form a farmers' club and all those present are anxious to see the club organized. Mr. Andrew Robertson, secretary and chairman, and Mr. Robert Wylie, secretary and treasurer. The objects of the club were stated to be the reading of papers and discussion of subjects bearing on farming, stock raising, and other matters generally. The subscription was fixed at 2s. 6d. per annum, and the first regular meeting is to be held on Saturday, the 27th inst., at 7 o'clock. The meetings are to be monthly and on the nearest Monday to the full moon, at Pratt's hotel."

FIFTEEN Cinquages were landed on Monday (says the Townsville Herald) of the 13th December from the Corea, which vessel took them on board at that port. They were the crew of a steamer of the British-India Company's steamer Albany. The whole of the men have been engaged by Mr. Philip for the Colonial Sugar Company, and will leave by the Victoria tomorrow evening for Dunedin. They agree to work for 12 months, and the rate of wages is very fair—25s. per month for the first six months, 30s. for the second and third years; the employer to provide them with food and clothing, and pay their passage from Colombo to the plantation, and thence to Dunedin at the expiration of the year.

THE Brisbane Courier, Saturday, December 23, 1882. CHRISTMAS IN THE SHOPS. YESTERDAY was a busy day with those who cater for the indulgent buyers of the festive season, and this day will no doubt be still more busy. The progress made so far in shop decoration is not great; that is to say, only about one out of every dozen business men have their windows set out as they are to be, and therefore it is premature somewhat to attempt to describe the decorations in prominent places. In all drapery establishments, with few exceptions—the solid work had to-day, but the finishing touches were left for to-day. The grocers, fruiterers, and butchers, could hardly make a start at all, and it was only by dint of careful packing that the articles managed to keep their articles fresh looking and sound for exhibition on Christmas Eve. On every hand, however, the signs of the coming festival were apparent. The streets were unusually well filled; till 10 p.m. purchasers flocked in and out of the various places of business, and there was undoubtedly a good trade.

Among those who have taken time by the forelock, and have everything ready for to-morrow's display, are Messrs. Foster and Kell, the principal windows of their Queen-street premises, and Messrs. Watson and Kell, who have had their windows set out with a number of persons who can do no better than to say that they are not in a position to do justice to their stock of charming articles. Messrs. Foster and Kell are, as usual, to the fore in giving an exhibition of their splendid stock. When the display is completed, the articles are to be sold at a special price, and the articles are to be sold at a special price, and the articles are to be sold at a special price.

THE Brisbane Courier, Saturday, December 23, 1882. MAIL NEWS. OLD COUNTRY NOTES. THE results of the autumn sitting, so far as they have gone, are certainly instructive, and in many respects curious. The Ministerial whips calculated upon a majority of fifty upon the famous first clause resolution, and very sanguine members of the party went on as to lay odds that the figures would even run to sixty, but that there would be eighty-four was not expected by any. This decisive victory looking that the Ministerial side in my last letter about the strength of the Ministry at the present moment. The doubtful Liberal after all voted straight, and many of them practical, patriotic statesmen.

OUR CABLE MESSAGE. FATAL EXPLOSION. SIXTEEN women have been killed by an explosion in the cartridge factory at Fort Valerien. FRANCE AND MADAGASCAR. LONDON, December 21. It is reported that the Government of Madagascar have agreed to recognise the footing now held by France in that island.

THE TONGVIN EXPEDITION. LONDON, December 21. In consequence of the military activity displayed by Russia, which has been exciting uneasiness for some time past, the Prussian railways towards the Russian frontier are being vigorously pushed forward, and the various garrisons are being strengthened and increased.

EXECUTION OF OBERDANK. LONDON, December 21. Oberdank, the man who was arrested at Trieste for manufacturing bombs, which it is supposed were intended to be used against the Emperor of Austria during his late visit to that city, and who was subsequently found guilty and sentenced to death, has been executed.

CONVERSION OF THE VICTORIAN LOAN. LONDON, December 21. The opinion is generally expressed in the City that the proposed scheme for the conversion of the Victorian loan will prove unworkable.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS. LONDON, December 21. Mr. Algernon Thomas, of Oxford University, has been appointed professor of natural science at the University of Auckland, New Zealand; and Mr. Thomas Tucker, a fellow of Cambridge, has been appointed professor of classics and English literature at the same institution.

PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR. LONDON, December 21. Prince Albert Victor, eldest son of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, will reside at Oxford University during the next term.

AUSTRIA AND RUSSIA. LONDON, December 21. The Hungarian Press, commenting on the threatened complications between the empires of Eastern Europe, protests that it is unsafe for Austria to contend with Russia.

THE BRITISH CABINET. LONDON, December 21. The Daily News, in an article on the recent appointments in the British Cabinet, suggests the desirability of a fresh allotment of the several portfolios.

PROSECUTION OF MR. BIGGAR. LONDON, December 21. It is considered probable that Mr. Biggar, M.P. for Cavan, will be presented by the Government for sedition.

RELIEF FOR IRELAND. LONDON, December 21. In consequence of the increasing destitution in Ireland, many leading Irishmen are strongly urging upon the Government the necessity of commencing relief works.

A NAVAL COMMANDER DISMISSED. LONDON, December 21. Commander F. W. R. Maxwell Heron, of H.M.S. Clyde, a drill ship for the royal naval reserve at Aberdeen, has been dismissed from the service for pecculation.

REUTER'S AGENCY. LONDON, December 21. The Right Hon. Henry Fawcett, Postmaster-General, who has for some time been seriously ill, is now gradually recovering.

BREXID AND THE FINANCIAL CONTROL. LONDON, December 21. M. Bredif, formerly a member of the Board of Financial Control in Egypt, and who has since the war been excluded from the sitting of the Council, has been allowed to resume office as Controller.

COMMAND OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY. ALEXANDRIA, December 21. Major-General Sir Evelyn Wood, who was appointed to the command of the Egyptian army, has arrived here, and will undertake his new duties forthwith.

THE TONGVIN EXPEDITION. PARIS, December 21. The difference of opinion in the French Cabinet as to the desirability of the proposed expedition to Tongvin has been adjusted, and operations will at once be proceeded with. A credit of 11,000,000 francs has been voted for the expedition.

GERMANY AND RUSSIA. BERLIN, December 21. The German Government are making extensive military preparations on their eastern frontier. The garrisons are being largely reinforced, and increased barrack accommodation is being rapidly extended in the vicinity of the frontier.

THE QUEENSLAND MAILS. PORT SAID, December 21. The B.L.S.N. Company's R.M.S. Clyobessa, from Brisbane to New York, left Port Said for London on Tuesday.

THE FRENCH ANARCHISTS. PARIS, December 21. Prince Krapotkin, one of the leaders of the anarchist organisation in France, was sentenced at Lyons to-day to a term of imprisonment for inciting the populace by the issue of incendiary manifestos.

RESTORATION OF CETYWAYO. NATAL, December 21. The troops at Pietermaritzburg, who were ordered to be present at the reinstatement of Cetywayo, started to-day for Zululand.

DESTRUCTIVE STORM IN NEW-FOUNDLAND. ST. JOHN'S, December 21. During the past two days a great storm has swept over the coast of Newfoundland. Twenty-five vessels were wrecked at St. John's.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND. LONDON, December 21. Signs of distress are becoming apparent in many counties in Ireland, owing to the severity of the weather.

QUEENSLAND NEWS. [FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.] TOOWOOMBA, December 21. A most deplorable event has occurred here. Yesterday afternoon it was reported to the police that Miss Edwards, who had charge of the millinery department in Messrs. Alexander and Munro's establishment, was missing. She had been under treatment by Dr. Roberts for an affection of the brain, and was in delicate health. She left home that morning with the intention of proceeding to her place of business. On search being made it was found that she had been seen passing some houses on the Main Range towards the old tollbar. A party of townsmen, including her employers, were out last night searching for her. At daylight this morning the search was resumed, and at 6 o'clock the black tracker with Constable Kelly found her tracks and traced them to a waterhole in a creek four miles from Toowoomba, where her lifeless body was found face downwards on the bank. Her hat, handkerchief, parasol, and mittens were found close by. The body was removed to the morgue. It is conjectured that Miss Edwards left home in a state of high delirium, wandered towards the Range, and as the weather was hot, suffered from thirst, searched for drink to water, and on finding it rushed in, drank to excess, and became suffocated. She was known several times previously to faint, once in a bath. The melancholy event has cast a gloom over the whole town.

AN EXPLOSION OF GAS TOOK PLACE to-night at Messrs. Stevens and Co.'s new store, where preparations were being made for Christmas. Fortunately no great damage was done. The weather is cloudy and threatening. Several showers fell this morning.

CHARTEERS TOWERS, December 21. No. 2 Old Identity has crushed 15 tons of stone for a yield of 2000z. gold. No. 5 Queen has cleaned up for 48oz. and No. 1 Rainbow for 65oz. gold.

INTERCOLONIAL. [FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.] NEW SOUTH WALES. SYDNEY, December 21. Mr. Urwin, of the Colonial Secretary's Department, has been appointed private secretary to His Excellency the Governor, in place of Mr. Blomfield, resigned.

THE INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSE OF THE LATE DISASTER AT CRESSICK IS begun, and is intended to be of a most searching and complete character. The relief fund now amounts to £15,000, and subscriptions are still coming in freely.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA. ADELAIDE, December 21. The P. and O. Company's new steamer Ballarat arrived at Albany this morning.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA. PERTH, December 21. The Rob Roy arrived at Geraldton on Wednesday from Cooswick, the principal port of the Northern district. She brings news of a hurricane having blown over the coastward of Cooswick. The gale commenced on the 7th inst., worked round to the east, and blew until the 8th. A vessel, supposed to be the Birmah, with sheep from Beagle Bay, belonging to Messrs. Lukinminger, was seen here to-day in the gale, fifty miles south-west of the Lacedaede. The Heather Belle, with a number of sheep from the Fitzroy, chartered by Mr. Alexander, was on an account of Mr. Game, of London, arrived safely at Beagle Bay with the loss of only 200 sheep.

NEW GUINEA LABOURERS. TO THE EDITOR OF THE BRISBANE COURIER. Sir,—Will you allow me room for a word or two? By your telegraphic information this morning I see that the Association of Maryborough have resolved to communicate with the Rev. Mr. M. Farlane with a view of obtaining labourers from New Guinea. Some few weeks ago I received a letter from Rev. J. Chalmers, who is well known for his heroic, broad views and energy. He has had a long experience in mission work—first in the South Sea Island Mission, and in the New Guinea Mission since its commencement. He has been in possession of the land of New Guinea as long as he has been in the world. He has been so open as to make it not possible that white men can, without risk of life, dwell in the interior of New Guinea. He has heard, and his words ought to have weight. In the letter I refer to, Mr. Chalmers, writing from Cooktown, Queensland, writes that he heard it reported that Queensland was likely to import native labour from New Guinea. To take native labour from New Guinea is the beginning of unending difficulties and murders on the coast. The most numerous natives among the islands are the New Guinea and Cooktown, New Caledonia, and Fiji.

THE above was written previous to the late news from the Port Moresby. Mr. Chalmers is stationed in New Guinea and Mr. M. Farlane on Darvel Island, which is in Queensland territory.—EDW. GRIFITH.

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