

The News of the Week

IN THE DOMINION.

Wanganui is to have a co-operative bakery.

There are now 22,124,000 sheep in New Zealand, an increase for one year of 1,140,000.

Dunedin City Council has a debt of £963,426; new loan proposals increase this to £1,241,000.

The City of Wellington is inviting tenders in London for a hundred thousand 4 per cent debentures at par.

An old age pensioner at Russell is supposed to be of the age of 104, and another at Otaki is believed to be 107.

The latest newspaper, "The Bluff Press and Stewart Island Gazette," claims to be the most southerly journal in the world.

Westport Harbour Board has works in hand to cost over £300,000, and has just received authority to execute further harbour improvements costing £200,000.

The Hawke's Bay Education Board has adopted a scheme for a winter school for teachers at Gisborne, and decided to hold the session during the third and fourth weeks in August.

There are between 30 and 40 patients at Pakatona Incubates' Home, and the Salvation Army is now arranging to acquire Ruthe's Island, for the purpose of additional accommodation.

Figures prepared by the Tramway Department show that the average fare charged to passengers is 1.33d per mile in Wellington, the same in Dunedin, 2.12d in Christchurch, and 1.47d in Auckland.

Heavy losses have been suffered by Mr. Elliott, a Kawhia settler, who has just completed the muster of his sheep. When the late bush fires started he had 2368 sheep on his section, and now can only muster 1460.

The number of carcasses of mutton exported from the Dominion last year was 1,821,426, as against 1,921,465 in 1907, and 1,600,773 in 1906. The lamb carcasses exported last year numbered 2,826,437, as compared with 2,519,417 in 1907, and 2,134,563 in 1906.

There are now in New Zealand 121 industrial unions of employers, with a total membership of 3,630. There are 310 workers' unions, with a membership of 45,614. Eight employers' unions and nine workers' unions failed to send in returns, and their registration will accordingly be cancelled.

The Wanganui Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution urging the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to report on the timber industry of the Dominion, particularly with regard to the effect of the importation of Oregon pine upon the New Zealand timber industry.

A meeting of the Painters and Decorators' Union at Napier carried the following resolution as the outcome of an appeal for aid:—"That the union absolutely refuses to grant any financial assistance to the Wellington Bakers' Union, and disapproves of their action in striking."

Napier Borough Council has decided to approach the Municipal Conference with a proposal to secure amending legislation to conserve the rights of cities and boroughs in the matter of electric lighting. The Council is legally advised that the present Act does not prevent private supplies within certain limitations.

The immigration and emigration returns for June, 1908, disclose an excess of departures over arrivals, to the number of 22. This is an improvement on last year's figures for the same period, when the excess amounted to 323. The figures are as follows:—1908, arrivals 2706, departures 2758; 1907, arrivals 4678, departures 2201.

The recent floods in the Taieri County have damaged roads and bridges to the extent of about £5000, and Government assistance will be asked to that extent.

A net profit of £5349 18/0 was made by the Wellington Investment, Trustee and Agency Company during the year ended June 30th last. The dividend for the year is 6 per cent.

Work on the Canterbury end of the Arthur's Pass tunnel on the Midland

Railway will be commenced shortly. Mr Leslie Reynolds, the engineer in charge of the works, who has been in the North Island for the past five or six weeks investigating harbour schemes at Wairoa, Gisborne and Tokomaru Bay, states that it is possible that the work may be put in hand in about a month, and at the latest in three months.

In Auckland shops there are no less than 2918 assistants employed, 2209 in Wellington city, 2539 in Christchurch, and 2197 in Dunedin. The wages paid in Christchurch last year amounted to £228,713, Auckland came next with £221,097, Wellington third with £212,097, and Dunedin's total reached £189,215. Working out the averages, however, the order is reversed as follows:—Wellington, £96; Christchurch, £90 11/7; Dunedin, £86 1/-; Auckland, £75 15/5.

Severe Wintry Weather.

The weather during the past week has been unusually cold, and heavy falls of snow are reported from a number of Southern districts. In the MacKenzie Country, in South Canterbury, the sheepfarmers anticipate heavy losses. It is stated that where hundreds were lost after the last great snowstorm, some few years back, the loss this time will run into thousands.

In Central Otago the railway traffic has been impeded by the deep snow, which is in some places as high as the funnels of the locomotives. Even on the Main Trunk Line, in the North Island, the snowfall has been so heavy as to interfere with the running of trains, and the work of railway construction was temporarily brought to a standstill. At Gisborne the hills were on Saturday last all covered with snow, and on one of the inland roads the coach had to go through snow up to the horses' knees. The Port Hills at Christchurch had also a mantle of white. The Auckland weather has been cold, but bright.

Maori Congress.

The Maori Congress opened in the Wellington Town Hall on July 14th, when addresses of welcome were given by the Hon. Jas. Carroll and Hon. Geo. Fowlds. The latter impressed on the natives the importance of giving attention to health matters, and expressed a hope that the congress would result in improvement of questions affecting the native race.

The official opening ceremony took place in the afternoon, when addresses were delivered by the Governor and Sir Robert Stout.

Discussion on Maori councils and sanitary inspectors took place on July 16.

The Hon. J. Carroll, in an address, said he was pleased to find the Maoris were now ready to regard the Maori councils seriously, and not look upon them as playthings, as once there was some disposition to do. It had been said that the Act under which the councils got their power did not give enough. If that was so, let the Maoris move to have the Act amended. Mr. Carroll spoke of the old system of sanitation, stating that after the advent of the white man there were disagreements, and canoes began to drift, but the time had come to make a strong effort to get back to better health conditions. Let the Maori get the drifting canoe, turn it round, face it to stem the torrent, and, by proper attention to sanitation, improve their dwellings so that their people would become as physically fit as their ancestors. The weakness of Maori Councils to effect this improvement so far might be partly due to insufficient power and funds, but it had to be further said that jealousy on the part of those who were not members had made the work more difficult.

On Friday, July 17, Messrs. A. L. D. Fraser and Herries, M.P.'s, delivered addresses on the question, "Has the time arrived for removing legislative distinctions between pakeha and Maori?" Mr. Fraser urged that the Maori should be placed on the same electoral roll as the pakeha, and allowed to vote for the candidate he thought best. Mr. Herries agreed with him in the main, but he denied that there was any colour line, and said he thought they would mingle with the pakeha as one people. The Englishman was a mixture of Celt,

Saxon, Norman, and Dane, and they produced a distinct nation. He hoped there would be this coming link of pakeha and Maori in New Zealand. He looked forward to the day when the future New Zealander would boast with the Anglo-Saxon of having Maori blood in his veins.

On July 20th the Congress discussed a letter from Lady Stout urging that all Maori girls who were not fitted for the professions of missionaries, teachers, doctors, or nurses should be taken as domestic helps. After discussion it was decided that the Congress was fully sympathetic with the object that Lady Stout had in view, and is of opinion that the domestic training of Maori girls is to be encouraged as part of a general scheme for uplifting the Maori race, but that the employment of Maori girls as domestic servants amongst Europeans is not desirable as a general practice."

The Railways Report.

The annual report of the Railways Department for the year ended March 31st, 1908, presented to Parliament on July 14, is of a highly satisfactory character.

Seventeen miles 29 chains of extensions were opened during the year. The net revenue, £812,179, the Minister states, is equal to a return of 3.33 per cent on the capital invested in the open lines, and 3.04 per cent on the total capital, £26,735,140, invested in opened and unopened lines. The cost of working the Kawakawa sections exceeded the earnings by £912. The Kaihu section has also been worked at a loss of £463. The number of train miles run during the year was 7,051,274, being an increase of 295,820.

The total number of ordinary passengers carried was 2,756,716, an increase of 155,930 over the previous year. This is very gratifying, as the returns for the previous year showed the phenomenal increase of 77,404 passengers over 1906, consisting largely of traffic of a non-recurring character, which was induced by the New Zealand International Exhibition season. Tickets issued numbered 385,174, an increase of 19,760. The number of workers' 12-trip tickets was 43,961, and of workers' weekly tickets available on suburban lines 101,190. These tickets continue to maintain their popularity. Holiday excursion tickets numbered 732,135, being a decrease of 124,277 when compared with the previous year. This, however, is accounted for by the fact that this class of ticket was issued to Christchurch during the whole currency of the Exhibition. School, factory, and friendly societies' excursion tickets numbered 113,080, an increase of 17,416. The number of school, factory, and friendly society excursions run during the year in the principal districts was:—Auckland, 27; Wanganui, 60; Wellington-Napier, 42; Christchurch, 141; Dunedin, 95; Invercargill, 39.

The coaching and goods traffic showed large increases, with the exception of sheep, wool, and grain. In coaching the increases have been as follows:—Parcels, 7636; horses, 653; carriages, 389; dogs, 5685. In live stock and goods traffic the increases were:—Cattle, 17,720 head; pigs, 10,765 head; chaff, lime, etc., 1451 tons; firewood, 918 tons; timber, 49,057 tons; merchandise, 45,248 tons; minerals, 184,407 tons. The decrease in the wool traffic was 7568 tons; grain, 31,138 tons; and sheep, 67,301 head. The net increase in the gross tonnage was 246,000 tons. The decrease in sheep traffic is due entirely to the heavy movement of sheep that took place during the previous year, owing to the drought. Although, therefore, the sheep traffic for the year under review compared unfavourably with that for 1907, it was, nevertheless, greater by some 700,000 head than the traffic of any other year when normal conditions have prevailed.

The average number of men employed during the year was 12,338, against 10,858 the previous year, an increase of 1480. The amounts charged to duplication of lines during the year were:—Wellington - Hutt duplication works, £38,830; new Hutt road and purchase of land for same, £7391; Auckland-Penrose duplication works, £54,302; Addington - Rolleston duplication works, £11,031; Dunedin-Mosgiel duplication and deviation of line, £74,720.

Total earnings, 1908	£2,761,038
" " " " 1907	2,605,094
Total expenditure, 1908	1,949,759
" " " " 1907	1,812,482
Net profit on working, 1908	812,179
" " " " 1907	812,178

In concluding the report explains that the increased cost of maintenance was

very largely due to the policy of betterment that had been followed during the past few years. In view of the large economies that can be effected in the cost of operating the railways of the Dominion if the gradients were flattened and alignment improved, thus enabling increased loads to be hauled, arrangements are to be made to obtain the data necessary to formulate a scheme for dealing with the matter in a practical and comprehensive manner. It is proposed to extend the issue of 50-trip family and 50-trip single commutation tickets to distances up to 25 miles, to issue workers' weekly tickets under the usual conditions to stations between Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt, and to extend the Wellington suburban area to Upper Hutt. It is also proposed during the next summer season to make an experimental issue of week-end tickets to and from the various week-end resorts served by the railways, and, in the event of the result being satisfactory, to further extend the issue as circumstances warrant. Mr. Hall-Jones estimates the revenue for the year ending March 31, 1909, at £2,835,000, and the expenditure at £2,020,000.

Ransom for a Stolen Picture.

Three months ago there mysteriously disappeared from the Academy of Fine Arts in Wellington a picture entitled "Surrey Hills," by W. B. Leader. The picture, which is valued at about £600, is the property of the city, and the Mayor was approached by correspondence, in disguised handwriting, to pay ransom for the restoration of the picture. The letters were signed "A. G. Ransom," and at first £150 was demanded. The Sailors' Rest was indicated as the place where replies might be sent, and subsequently a certain column in the "New Zealand Times" was suggested as a medium for negotiations. As the money was not forthcoming the thief then wrote threatening to cut the picture into pieces the size of postage stamps and return it in that form. Another expedient adopted by the holder of the picture was to threaten the Mayor with personal violence unless the £150 demanded was paid. Eventually the demand was reduced to £50, and this sum the Mayor paid out of his own pocket, with the result that the picture was restored on July 17 as silently and mysteriously as it was taken away.

Poultry Championships.

The Hastings Poultry and Pigeon Show opened on July 17. The entries in all classes constitute a record. The Golden Wyandotte championship was awarded to Hickling (Pabianita). R. S. Young (Palmerston) gained the champion in the White Orpington class. Boyes (Wellington) won the North Island Wyandotte Club's shield for the best Wyandotte, and Bateman (Dannevirke) the shield for most points in any one variety of Wyandottes. W. A. Hanson (Auckland), for Silver Wyandottes, was awarded first for hen and first and special for pullet.

At the North Island of New Zealand Wyandotte Club's annual meeting, Capt. Hood (president) congratulated the club on its membership, which is over eighty. It was stated that the new champion shield had been subscribed for the best birds in the club's show. The following officers were elected:—President, Mr. John Jarvis; vice-presidents, Messrs. W. A. Boyes, E. T. Bateman, F. Dacre, L. Luxford, Capt. Hood, J. Currie; committee, Messrs. T. Jamieson, T. R. Boyes, F. Bradley, T. J. Leighton; secretary, Mr. T. R. Boyes; treasurer, Mr. Guthrie. It was recommended that next year the Wyandotte Show be held in Auckland.

Teachers' Superannuation.

At a meeting of the Otago Educational Institute on July 17, the question of the superannuation fund was discussed. The opinion was expressed that teachers should keep to their own bill, with annuities based on average salaries over the whole period of service, with £200 as a minimum, otherwise the fund would be depleted by higher salaried officers retiring in the next few years on allowances not justified by their small contributions.

A motion, "That this Institute desire the Minister of Education to classify teachers and positions and control all appointments," was discussed, and it was decided to remit it to the Council of the New Zealand Educational Institute for its consideration.