

Sad Drable Tragedy.

A terrible tragedy occurred on July 17 at Maungatautari, about ten miles beyond Kihikihi, when Frank Mason, of Mason Bros., runholders, killed his own child and then committed suicide.

Constable Lander, who proceeded to Maungatautari, on entering the Masons' house, found the dead body of a little baby boy, aged 10 months, in the centre of the floor with his head shattered by a gunshot wound, whilst the father's body lay behind the door, with a bullet wound just below the left ear.

Particulars regarding the tragedy are somewhat meagre. From what can be ascertained things do not appear to have been going well with Mason financially lately, and losses of stock preyed so heavily on him that they appear to have unbalanced his mind. He has been decidedly queer lately, and on the morning of the tragedy his wife noticed that he was more strange than usual.

As the day progressed Mason got worse, and threatened to shoot himself and the child.

His wife took a rifle out of his hand. Shortly afterwards, a neighbour, Mrs. Brett, came over, and with Mrs. Mason went into the kitchen.

While there they heard two shots, and, rushing in, found that Mason had obtained a gun, which was also in the house, and shot the child in the side of the face and blown its brains out, shattering the skull fearfully.

Mason had then apparently turned the weapon on himself. The charge entered the left side of his face just below the jaw, and the whole face was blown off, leaving the man unrecognisable.

Deceased was a tall man, and could easily have reached the trigger to discharge the gun into his own head. He was about 35 years of age.

Mason was some time ago farming at Eureka, 12 miles from Hamilton, and while there he married Miss Danks, and went home for a trip with his wife. On returning to the colony they settled down at Maungatautari. Mason was an enthusiast in hunting and polo, and both he and his wife were very well known throughout the Waikato.

Te Whiti's Monument.

Messrs Russell and Son, monumental masons, of New Plymouth, are engaged in the completion of a massive monument to be erected at Parihaka in memory of the chief Te Whiti. It is of polished Aberdeen granite, and stands 11 feet high. The basement is four feet square, and on this is a solid circular column bearing the inscription and four small Peterhead columns. These are surmounted by a handsome cap and vase. The whole monument is being nicely carved, and on each side of the four panels of the cap is the emblem of Te Whiti. The inscription is being carved in Maori and English. It reads as follows:—

This Monument is erected to the Memory of Te Whiti—o Rongoma, who died at Parihaka on 18th November, in the year of our Lord, 1907, aged 90 years.

He was a man who did great deeds in suppressing evil so that peace may reign as a means of salvation to all people on earth. His emblem, the Raukura, which signifies "Glory to God on high, peace on earth and goodwill to all mankind," he bequeathed to his people Te Ate Aua.

The monument will be unveiled on August 18. Natives from all parts of the North Island are expected to be present at the ceremony.

Arrival of Immigrants.

The steamer Arawa, which arrived in Wellington, on July 13th, brought out a large contingent of third-class passengers, who intend settling down in New Zealand. The total in this class was 270 persons, and of these 104 have been granted assisted passages. They come from all parts of the United Kingdom. Included in the list are nearly 30 domestic servants bringing a declared capital ranging from £2 to £10 each. Of these £3 landed with a declared capital of £2 each. The others were made up of "capitalists" of whom there were three with £10, and others with £4 each.

Included in the immigrants were a baker, a silversmith, and two carpenters, all going to work already found for them; also two joiners, a grocer and a dressmaker.

A dairy-farmer arrived with £400 to his credit, and there were five farmers whose capital between them amounted to £150. A fruit-preserver and wheelwright (combined) had £300 in hand. There joined the Arawa a party of stalwart Tasmanian bushmen, who informed the labour officer that they had come to New Zealand for a holiday, but that if they liked the country they would remain in it.

Several Wellington ladies were among the first to board the Arawa, not to welcome friends returning from the grand tour, but to interview the domestic servants. Notwithstanding tempting terms, and liberal concessions as to "time out," with easy working conditions, the ladies were wholly unsuccessful in their quest for domestic helpers. Miss Bremner, of the Labour Department was among the visitors to the Arawa to give the women immigrants all the information which would be of assistance to them in getting remunerative employment, but the domestics were all engaged before leaving London. Seventeen of them have engagements in Hawke's Bay.

The Religious Education Question.

The Wellington Diocesan Synod discussed a resolution expressing approval of the New South Wales educational system, by which teachers of various religious denominations have permission to visit State schools within ordinary school hours for the purpose of giving instruction. It was suggested that a committee be set up to formulate a scheme for New Zealand to be referred to the next session of the General Synod with a view to making representations to Parliament for amendment of the Education Act.

Several speakers said it was merely beating the air to bring up such a resolution, as people would not agree to a change.

Eventually the Synod carried a resolution to proceed with the next business on the order paper.

The Hawke's Bay Education Board, by five votes to three, carried a motion fixing the school hours at 24½ per week, and not exceeding five per day. It is generally understood that the object of the motion is to facilitate the giving of religious instruction in schools where the committees are favourable.

Slump in the Timber Trade.

The result of the stoppage of timber orders in this district is the closing of several mills. The Ruatapu mills closed on Saturday, making five now closed down in the vicinity of Hokitika. Only those mills with white pine orders for Australia are keeping going full time. A large number of men are now thrown out of work, and if the dearth of employment continues it will be a serious matter for the district, a number being dependent on the timber industry. A meeting in favour of increasing the duty on Oregon pine has been held at Kumara, and similar meetings will be held at Ross and Hokitika.

Wellington Tramways.

The annual report on the operations of the Wellington Tramways has been compiled. It covers the period for the twelve months ending 31st March. The total revenue for the year was £122,994, as compared with £96,619, earned during the previous year, an increase of £26,375. The total passengers carried during the year numbered 20,105,723, an increase over the foregoing twelve months of 3,208,889. During the year there were 228 collisions with vehicles, and 315 accidents to persons, 190 of which were caused by passengers, mostly ladies, stepping from moving cars. The cost of repairing cars damaged through accident was £400.

The Trades' Conference.

The annual conference of New Zealand Trades and Labour Councils opened at Wellington on July 20th.

In the annual report opinion was expressed by the executive that every financial member of the Union should be entitled to exercise his or her vote, both for the election of the Arbitration Court and Conciliation Board representatives. Practically a plebescite of members was needed to ensure these representatives being elected on a democratic basis.

Regarding the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, the report stated that the executive was convinced that the

workers of the Dominion would strictly adhere to the provisions of the Act, providing that the Legislature amends it in the direction of making an Act to encourage the formation of industrial unions, the granting of unconditional statutory preference to Unionists, removal of vexatious delays caused by the Court not dealing with matters referred back until months have elapsed, and amending the Act so as to provide for a minimum wage. The opinion is also expressed that had the Legislature given conciliation boards more power with regard to making recommendations there would have been no need for the suggested abolition of these boards; also that the time has arrived when the workers should use every endeavour to prevent lawyers from appearing before the Court.

Mr. Thorn (Canterbury) was elected president.

Accidents, Epidemics, etc.

Mr. Thomas Hall, a well-known settler of Leamington, was found on the Maungatautari road, with shocking injuries, caused by a wagon having capsized. He died shortly after.

A young unmarried man named Probert was fatally injured at the Wai-kino battery, Waihi, on July 14th, and died about an hour after the accident occurred. He was caught in the elevator wheel and carried up to the top, where he was fearfully crushed before the machinery could be stopped. The deceased was a son of Mr. W. Probert, builder, of Newton-road, Auckland.

A young man named Gordon Watson, son of Mr. G. W. Watson, colliery proprietor, of Pakawau and Dunedin, left Pakawau in a small boat on Monday morning, intending to go to Collingwood, five miles distant. He has not since been heard of, and it is feared he has lost his life.

Patrick Finlay, an elderly man, who sustained injury to his spine through a fall off a wool bale on the wharf on May 18, died in the Wellington Hospital on July 16.

THE AMERICAN FLEET

Notes on the Preparations.

The training ship Amokura has gone on the slip for overhaul prior to leaving for Auckland to take part in the fleet week festivities.

Already some 60 passengers have booked at Gisborne by the Wimmera, arriving in Auckland on the Sunday of the fleet's arrival.

A rifle match is being arranged between a team of 50 men from the fleet, and a similar number from the Auckland troops. This match will take place at Penrose on the Thursday.

The Melbourne arrangements for fleet week are completed. The route of the procession will be the same as that adopted at the reception of the Duke of York.

Money is not coming in freely towards the Sydney citizen's fund for the entertainment of the American Fleet, and there is likely to be a poor show as far as decorations are concerned.

There is reason to believe that a movement is afoot among domestic servants in Melbourne to quit service during the week the American Fleet is there and take up work again when the festivities are over.

The Cambridge Borough Council has appointed a committee to arrange for the entertainment of a party of 12 medical officers, who will be invited to visit the Te Waikato Sanatorium. If the officers accept, they will stay at Cambridge overnight, and join the Rotorua party at Hamilton the next day. Dr. Purdy, District Health Officer, has expressed his intention of trying to arrange the trip.

A number of American ladies at present residing in Auckland have clubbed together to present to the Admiral, officers, and men of the fleet a large floral device in the form of the Union Jack and Stars and Stripes in red, white, and blue flowers, crossed on a flagstaff, which, with poles and pedestal, will be picked out in green. From the top will be flown streamers of ribbon. This presentation will be made to Admiral Sperry when the fleet anchors.

Arrangements have now been completed for the tea to be provided at Hamilton, en route to Rotorua, on the Wednesday evening, and the Inncheon on the return trip on Friday. The Hamilton Borough Council having placed at the disposal of the Government Commis-

sioners (Messrs. Donne and Hamer) the use of the large hall opposite the Railway Station, the decorations at present in use for the Winter Show are to be left until after the fleet's visit. The catering will be in the hands of the local trade. The hall is 360ft. long by 60ft. wide, so that it will accommodate several thousands of guests if necessary.

The War Canoe.

As the result of correspondence between the Hon. Mr. Mahuta, M.L.C., and the Mayor of Auckland (says our Huntly correspondent), a large muster of natives, estimated at from 200 to 300, will accompany the crew chosen to man the war canoe on their visit to Auckland, and take part in the welcome to the American fleet. The natives appear to take a lively interest in the matter, and listen to and read the various accounts with considerable eagerness.

The Volunteer Review.

The grand review of volunteers and cadets during the visit of the American fleet promises to be a conspicuous feature of the celebrations. It has now been definitely decided to hold the review in the Domain on August 10 at 3 p.m. It is considered that there will be a muster of over 3000, including the public school cadets. Of this number, the Mounted Rifles will form a section over 800 strong. It has been decided to bring in all the troops of the district, together with their horses, field guns, etc.

Rifle Practice.

The American Consul-General (Mr. W. A. Prickett) has received the following letter from Commander A. W. Grant, Chief of Staff of the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Navy, from San Francisco:—

"In view of the challenge recently received from the Melbourne Rifle Club to hold a rifle match with this fleet during our stay in that port, the Commander-in-Chief U.S. Atlantic Fleet would thank you, if you could obtain permission for our rifle team to hold practice at such times as would not inconvenience the local teams, on some range in the vicinity of Auckland during our stay in that port. The distances especially desired are 200, 500, and 600 yards."

H.M.S. Powerful.

H.M.S. Powerful, the flagship of the Australian Squadron, left Sydney on the 11th inst, bound for the islands. After a call at Norfolk Island the Powerful proceeds to Suva, where she will remain for several days. At the Fijian port the Admiral will be the guest of Sir Everard in Thurn, High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. From Suva the warship goes to Auckland, being due there a couple of days in advance of the American Squadron. She will rendezvous at the New Zealand port with the other warships to take part in the welcome to the visitors. The Powerful leaves for Sydney on August 13, two days ahead of Admiral Sperry's fleet, and will arrive back in time to join in the festivities at that port.

The Admiral's Arrangements.

In reply to his application for detailed information as to the Auckland arrangements, the American Consul-General (Mr. W. A. Prickett) received the following cable from Admiral Sperry, on July 17th:—

"There will be two hundred officers available to participate in the principal functions: Landing and official reception, review of volunteer troops of Auckland district, official banquet Monday evening, horse races at Ellerslie and excursion to Rotorua."

"There are three Press correspondents with the fleet and one artist."

"3,500 men will be given liberty at 10 a.m. daily."

"The men will be paid in English money."

"The harbourmasters should board the Connecticut and Louisiana about at the North Head."

"No pilots are required."

"Plan of general anchorage forwarded is satisfactory."

"Supply ship Culgoa arrives August 8, and will give details."

These arrangements will coincide admirably with the Executive Committee's preparations. Many of the entertainments had been arranged for about 200 officers—the number stated by the Admiral. The Executive had also planned for the entertainment of 4,500 men per day, and the lesser number will, of course, be thus thoroughly provided for.