

The News of the Week

IN THE DOMINION.

The Chief Justice has granted leave to the Wanganui College Board of Trustees to borrow up to £35,000.

There are two centenarians on the old age pension list—one a widower, aged 107 years, the other a bachelor, aged 104. A further extension of the Wellington tramways is contemplated, to cost £10,000.

The oldest person in the Dominion is said to be Mr Henry Burling, of Wai-kanae, who is in his 108th year.

The Westport District Gold Miners' Industrial Union of Workers has applied to cancel its registration under the Arbitration Act.

The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, with a membership of 1070, claims to be the largest trades union in the colony.

A meeting of ratepayers on July 21st authorised the Auckland City Council to raise a loan of £130,000 for various city works and street improvements.

The total output of coal last year from New Zealand mines was 1,831,009 tons, an increase of 101,473 tons. Northern districts contributed 318,977 tons.

The post and telegraph revenue for the Dominion for the quarter ended June 30 last was £228,030, as against £212,381 for the corresponding quarter of 1907.

The latest proposal of the Wellington Harbour Board is a scheme to construct a canal and a dock in the closed western arm of the Hutt River, at a cost of £78,000.

The Domestic Workers' Union formed in Wellington has been refused registration on the ground "that domestic helps are only kept for comfort and convenience and not for profit."

During the quarter ended June 30 the amount of deposits in the Savings Banks was £2,607,857, compared with £2,422,440 for the corresponding quarter of 1907.

Cable advice was received by the Mayor on July 22 stating that the Wellington city loan of £100,000 (4 per cent debentures at par) has been satisfactorily floated. It is expected that the loan will net the Council about 98.

The election of a member of the Civil Service Superannuation Board resulted in the following gentlemen being elected:—Post and Telegraph: Messrs Huggins and McNicoll. Other Departments: Messrs Albion, Spence, and Bishop.

Napier Harbour Board returns for the half-year ending June 30 show a satisfactory increase in the trade of the port. Revenue totalled £33,864, as compared with £30,119 for the corresponding period of 1907. Imports increased from 48,750 tons to 54,862 tons, and exports from 12,065 tons to 12,479 tons.

Auckland's poultry industry is growing. For the quarter ended June 30, of this year the number of eggs put through the Government grading depot was 211,300, or 30,907 more than for the corresponding three months of 1907. Poultry for the same period showed a marked increase also, the figures being, 1908, 8119 head; 1907, 5927.

The report of a great coal seam being laid bare by a landslip in the Huntly district is discredited. The rumour has probably arisen through some confusion as to locality—the description of the extent of the deposit agreeing with the recent discovery of coal near Ngauruhia, where there are millions of tons of excellent quality in sight.

The s.s. Wimmers, which arrived at Auckland on Sunday last, had a very rough passage from Sydney, several deck cabins being smashed in by the heavy seas. One of the steerage passengers, named Benjamin Tallents, draper, of Federal-street, Auckland, died on the voyage. Deceased, who was 54 years of age, had been taken on board ill, and grew gradually worse, and expired as the vessel was coming down the coast.

The Wellington Harbour Board decided definitely to enter into an agreement for the acquisition of the Wellington patent ship. The Ship Company is to remain in possession of the property for 25 years, when the Board shall pay £230,000, and own the ship. A portion of the land not occupied by the ship is to be set apart for the use of the Union Steam Ship Company, which is to have the offer of this portion as a Glasgow lease, at the end of the 25 years.

An attempt is to be made to raise a volunteer corps in Wellington, all the members of which shall be men with war service. Mr. Gardner, who was a sergeant of the Fourth New Zealand Mounted Rifles in Africa and a captain in the Ninth, has the matter in hand. It is not stated whether the intention is to ask ex-mounted rifles with war service to comprise an infantry or a mounted corps. Men of all New Zealand contingents and of other irregular corps who have the necessary war service will be eligible.

Railway Statistics.

Railway returns for the Dominion extending over four weeks ending June 30 show a grand total revenue on Government lines of £212,545, and expenditure £158,145. The North Island totals were £92,903 and £69,370, and the South Island totals £119,642 and £88,765. On the Auckland main line the revenue was £33,227 and the expenditure £22,865. Whangarei: Revenue, £2,498; expenditure £919. Kaikoi: Revenue, £417; expenditure, £410; Kawakawa: Revenue, £117; expenditure, £251. Gisborne-Karakara: Revenue, £870; expenditure, £392.

Where Trade is Increasing.

A return of the increase in trade of the principal ports of the Dominion for the 10 years from 1897 to 1907, laid before the New Plymouth Harbour Board, shows that the trade of New Plymouth increased by 127 per cent. Other figures were as follows: Timaru 138 per cent. Gisborne 132 per cent. Wellington 106 per cent. Napier 93 per cent. Auckland 85 per cent. Invercargill 79 per cent. Lyttelton 68 per cent. Dunedin 50 per cent.

Assisted Immigration.

The s.s. Rimutaka, which is due at Wellington next week, from London, brings 102 assisted passengers, 75 of whom are adults with a total declared capital of £2300. One family, consisting of three brothers, brought up as farmers, and their sister, have a joint capital of £161. Forty-three of the immigrants are nominated by friends in New Zealand, and are coming to situations. Amongst the assisted passengers are 15 farmers, seven farm labourers, and nine domestic servants.

Successful Municipalisation.

For the past eleven months the electric light works have been owned by the Wellington City Council, and it is estimated by the Mayor that the profits for the year will amount to about £700 more than the Electrical Syndicate gained during its last year of operations in Wellington. This is in spite of the fact that the municipality has given consumers the benefit of a reduction in price, which equals £3000. Some £13,000 has been set apart out of earnings to form a sinking fund, meet interest charges, and allow for depreciation. After making the deductions, there remains a net profit of about £5000 for the 11 months' operations.

Auckland Tramways Dispute.

On Friday last, Dr. A. McArthur, S.M., the chairman of the Special Board of Conciliators set up in connection with the industrial dispute between the Auckland Electric Tramways Industrial Union of Workers and the Auckland Electric Tramways Company, Limited, delivered the decision of the Board. All the members of the Board were present, and the company and the union were represented by Mr. J. J. Walklate (general manager) and Mr. A. Rosser (secretary) respectively.

The Chairman of the Board was, in his own words, "the deciding element in each clause"—his casting vote having determined all the issues raised. The findings of the Board are thus summarised:—

- 1.—That Conductor Herdson be reinstated in his position.
- 2.—That the General Manager shall give a written guarantee that in future any employee being dismissed from the ser-

vices shall be given a valid reason for his dismissal.

3.—That any employee being sent to the head office for an alleged fault shall see all reports made against him and have the right to call evidence on his behalf.

4.—That any inspector proved guilty of making mis-statements or false reports against employees shall be instantly dismissed.

5.—Seeing that Mr. Lysaght's questionable methods were the real cause of the strike of November, 1906, and that the recent harassing of motormen and conductors by ticket inspectors has been in obedience to his instructions, he shall be removed from direct contact with the men.

6.—The Board directs that the foregoing recommendations shall take effect from the first day of September, 1908, and shall continue in force until the 31st day of August, 1910.

Dr. McArthur stated at considerable length his reasons for arriving at these decisions. In reply to a question, he said that no penalties were provided for breach of the award, "but the breaking of the agreement would be a very serious thing for either party."

Religious Instruction in Schools.

At the last meeting of the Wanganui School Committee permission was granted to members of the Minister's Association to give religious instruction from 9 to 9.25 on Wednesday morning of each week. The Chairman of the Education Board has now issued instructions that school hours must not be altered without permission of the Board. This is practically vetoing the School Committee's resolution.

H.M.S. New Zealand.

Captain F. C. D. Sturdee, of H.M.S. New Zealand, wrote to the High Commissioner's office a day or two ago asking for some music associated with New Zealand, for the use of the battleship's band. Mr. Campbell, the Librarian, sent him a copy of the song "God Defend New Zealand," the words of which are by Thomas Bracken, in three verses, of which the first is as follows:—

God of Nations, at thy feet
In the bonds of love we meet,
Hear our voices, we entreat,
God defend our free land!
Guard Pacific's triple star
From the shafts of strife and war;
Make our princes heard afar,
God defend New Zealand!

Captain Sturdee is having band parts made, and proposes to adopt "God Defend New Zealand" for his battleship. He has also accepted with thanks an offer of books of illustrations of New Zealand for the ship's library. "We are anxious," he wrote, "to identify the ship in any way possible with the great Dominion she is named after."

America in the Pacific.

The Prime Minister, in a speech delivered at a political social gathering on July 20, justified the expenditure authorised by the Government in the entertainment of the American Fleet, and took occasion to make some rather significant remarks concerning the future of the Pacific, and the peril of a possible Asiatic invasion.

Sir Joseph Ward said he was sorry the question of unemployment had been raised at all in regard to the coming and entertainment of the fleet. Putting the matter on the necessary basis of pounds, shillings and pence, he found that the whole cost of entertainment of the fleet would be 31d per head of our population. How much we were going to get by entertaining the fleet he would not condescend to say. He could say, however, how much the Government was going to receive from our own people by using our own public services. He had just had a computation made, which showed that 11d per head of our population, at the lowest estimate, would be received. It was simply giving absolute facts from information in the possession of the Railway Department and the Government. Our public services would bring us back at least £30,000. It would be a different matter if we were going into a discussion of the American laws and our own, but our position as part and parcel of the British Empire could not be ignored. America was a great power, on friendly terms with the United Kingdom, with which it did 50 millions sterling worth of trade every year. He did not believe that the great mass of our

working people were so forgetful of our obligations as to suppose that when the fleet was going to Samoa and Fiji, as at first announced, and afterwards to Australia, that it was for us to have said that we did not want it here. If we had said that, we should not have shown proper recognition of our duty to the Empire and to ourselves. (Applause.) We and our children might not see it, but there would some day be a fight to decide whether the white races should govern Australia, New Zealand, and other islands in the Pacific. If at that time we could have as our ally America, with her powerful fleet, we should be very glad to have them fighting shoulder to shoulder with us; yet when the Government felt it to be its duty to do what would be done in America if New Zealanders went there in a warship, they, unhappily, found the cry raised that the small amount of money that was to be spent would interfere with the employment of the people. The Government had sufficient resources to do its duty in welcoming the fleet, and also to do what was right in the way of employment for the people. (Applause.)

State Coal Mines and Depots.

The report of the working of the State coal mines for the year ended March last shows that the total quantity of coal shipped, including briquettes and eggcoals, was 237,300 tons, valued at £199,250. The values of the quantities supplied from the Point Elizabeth colliery were as follows:—Railways, £88,497; private customers and shipping companies, £35,851; Government Departments other than railways, £41,493. The values of the outputs from the Seddonville colliery were as follows:—Railways, £27,826; private customers and shipping companies, £2779; Government Departments other than railways, £2709. It is stated that the Christchurch and Wellington depots did remarkably well during the year, having increased their sales by about 8000 tons each, while at Wanganui, where a depot had been established for 11 months, some 4500 tons of coal had been disposed of. "It is intended," says the report, "to extend this class of business where the circumstances warrant the establishment of depots, and an endeavour is being made to arrange with municipal bodies to undertake the sale and distribution of coal in localities where State depots could not be run with financial success. The accounts of the Point Elizabeth colliery show a net profit of £15,431 for the year, whilst the Seddonville colliery shows a loss (including £1135 on the briquette plant) of £5580. The net profit on the working of the Wellington depot was £291, and on the Christchurch depot it was £417. The Wanganui depot showed a loss of £159. The net profit for the year on the entire account is shown as £3440."

Steel from Ironsand.

An important decision in the matter of an application for patent in connection with the smelting of ironsand has been given by the Registrar of Patents. The decision dealt with the application of Horace Brown, of America, for a patent for a process in the manufacture of steel in which ore finely divided is showered down a stack and subjected to a highly heated atmosphere. The application was opposed by Moore and Heskett, of Victoria, on the ground of an infringement of a similar process obtaining in connection with their invention. The registrar considered the objection of defendants had been sustained, and refused the application.

Bank of England Concessions.

As a result of negotiations by Sir Hector Carruthers (ex-Treasurer of New South Wales), the Bank of England has reduced the charges for the inscription and management of colonial stocks by 12½ per cent. The saving to New South Wales will be about £3000 annually. It is probable that the reduction will be extended to Queensland and New Zealand, saving about £3500 and £5000 respectively.

Praise of New Zealand.

The Rev. C. G. Ledger, vicar of Tupley, Herefordshire, who had temporary charge of St. Matthew's Church in Auckland during his visit to New Zealand, has been telling Londoners of the wonderful progress which New Zealand has