

a steamer Ashore.

Wilson's Promontory reports that the steamer Lady Mildred went ashore near the Promontory on Sunday night in a dense fog.

All hands are safe. The vessel is full of water.

Licensing Legislation.

The report of Mr Carson, who recently visited Victoria, New South Wales, and New Zealand to study the various systems of licensing legislation, was presented to the West Australian Parliament last week.

Mr Carson says that the Victorian system, though bureaucratic in form, has proved an admirable working machine for closing up the worst houses. These have to go from the districts where the licensed houses are thickest, while under the New South Wales system of local option reduction is carried in districts where there are so few publichouses that one more or less hardly affects the temperance or intemperance of the community.

As regards New Zealand, Mr Carson acknowledges the rapid strides made by the No-license movement, and admits the prospect of the licensed trade being wiped out altogether at no very distant date. He claims, however, that the system is still on its trial. Hitherto the experiment has been confined to comparatively small towns, and not until one of the four complete metropolitan areas with all its suburbs comes under No-license can the experiment be regarded as having been thoroughly tested.

In No-license towns he admits that there is less open drunkenness, and that the removal of open means of temptation has tended to wean some men from the old habit. On the other hand, the evidence, he says, is conclusive that the aggregate quantity of liquor consumed is practically unaffected, that much drinking still goes on in the No-license districts, that the closed bar has taken the place of the open bar, that there is more secret drinking and more drinking in the houses of the people, that where a license district is contiguous to a No-license district much drinking is precipitated from the latter into the former, and that the strength of the No-license vote is accounted for by the enthusiasm and splendid organization of the temperance party's woman's vote, influenced by woman's natural desire for social reforms.

It is pointed out that the concrete result of the New Zealand system does not compare favourably with Victoria. After a three years' strenuous No-license campaign about 150 houses are to be closed throughout the Dominion, and not the worst houses at that. More had been done in Victoria in 18 months, with the supreme advantage that the worst houses had been closed, while reduction has proceeded steadily by judicial process.

Schooner in a Gale.

The schooner Maroro, which left Newcastle for Wanganui on the 3rd inst., has returned to Sydney.

During a fierce gale on Friday, she was thrown on her beam ends, and Captain Peast was washed overboard and drowned. The mate narrowly escaped the same fate, being rescued from the rigging.

The vessel lost her mainmast, and sustained other slight damage.

A Marc's Nest.

Hung Yung Liang, the newly-appointed Chinese Consul-General for New Zealand, declared in the course of an interview in Sydney that the "yellow peril" fears were amusing and quite wide of the mark.

The Chinese, he remarked, had not the least idea of giving battle. The love of peace was ingrained in them, and they wished to co-operate in movements best calculated to advance the well-being of humanity as a whole.

Closing up the Ranks.

The executive officers of the Northern Colliery Employees' Federation have held several conferences with Mr Hickey, the New Zealand miners' representative.

The result of the resolutions formulated is to bring the New South Wales and New Zealand mining organizations into closer relationship for mutual support, and the seamen's and water-side workers' unions are also to be asked to co-operate.

The Naval Pinnace Disaster.

In connection with the collision between the steamer Dunmore and a pinnace belonging to H.M.S. Encounter, which occurred in Sydney Harbour on January 5, resulting in 15 bluejackets losing their lives, the Coroner (Mr. Stephen Murphy) found that the collision was caused by the negligent and careless navigation of Samuel Bryant, coxswain of the pinnace, who was committed for trial on a charge of manslaughter.

The Coroner said that it appeared to him that if the towline between the launch and the pinnace had been fastened so as to be quickly cast off in case of emergency, there would have been no loss of life. Captain Hansen, of the Dunmore, followed the regulations applicable to a case of this kind, and must be held acquitted of criminal negligence, but the Coroner was of opinion that he and his crew did not sufficiently exert themselves to save the lives of the men who had been drowned, and was also of opinion that Bryant was to some extent the victim of circumstances.

Vancouver Service.

Sir James Mills (general manager of the Union Steam Ship Company) interviewed the Postmaster-General last week, on the subject of improving the Vancouver mail service, in return for a larger subsidy.

It is proposed to increase the subsidy by £19,000, Canada's extra payment being approximately £10,677, Australia's £7663, and Fiji's £656, making a total subsidy of £85,000.

The contract is to be for three years from July 31, and in return for the increase Sir James Mills said the Union Steam Ship Company would improve the service by additional ships, to give a speed of 14 knots, or 22½ days for the run across the Pacific.

The Postmaster-General states that while he does not object to the increased subsidy, he thinks it should not be chargeable to the Postal Department.

Citizens from Italy.

The suggestion has been unofficially made to the Minister for Home Affairs that 400 or 500 boys, who lost their parents in the Italian earthquake, should be received as citizens of Australia. The boys are under the control of the Carmelites, and are being trained in agricultural work. The Minister thinks the matter is one for the State to consider.

Victorian Politics.

The Governor's speech at the opening of the session of Victorian State Parliament announced that the Government will pursue an active policy of reproductive works and railway construction. It will be necessary to ask for additional borrowing powers, and a loan will probably be floated at the first favourable opportunity.

After a brief recess, the Ministry will introduce some important policy measures.

The Clan Ranald Mystery.

The inquiry into the Clan Ranald disaster has failed to elicit any evidence to clearly account for the sudden evening of the vessel.

The cargo was properly stowed and the vessel well-found, and there is no ground for laying charges against the surviving officers.

There was no evidence to show that the deceased officers on watch neglected their duty.

Australia's Navy.

Leading shipbuilders on the Admiralty list have informed Captain Collins, the Commonwealth agent, that they will submit quotations for the destroyers on February 23 (says a London cable).

The Labour Council protests against the Federal Government letting the contract for the construction of two torpedo destroyers in England, while facilities for carrying out the work already exists in the Commonwealth.

The Federal Government has decided to at once order two torpedo-destroyers of the river class. They are to be of the latest approved type. Money has been allotted to establish a Government ship-building yard. The locality, or even the State, has not yet been determined. The first work to be undertaken in this yard will be the completion of another de-

stroyer. The two new boats will take about twelve months to construct. The river class of boats have a displacement of 650 tons to 700 tons; length overall, 230ft; breadth, 23ft. 6in.; maximum draught, 8ft. 6in.; speed, 26 knots; indicated horse-power, 9210; oil fuel; steaming radius, 2500 miles at 14 knots; over 3000 miles at 10 knots. They carry 150 tons of oil fuel. The armament is one 4in. quick-firing and three 12 pounder quick-firing guns, and three torpedo tubes, despatching 18in. torpedoes. The complement is 50 officers and men.

It is the intention of the Government to send to England skilled operatives to be employed by the successful tenderers on the work of construction. These men will be engaged on the understanding that on the completion of the contract they will return to Australia, and be employed building additional vessels. The cost of the two boats is to be defrayed from the £250,000 which was appropriated under the coastal defence vote. That amount, it is estimated, will be sufficient. The vessels, being efficient sea boats, will be brought from England under their own steam.

THE OLD COUNTRY.

The Indian 7½ million 3½ per cent. loan at 97 has been over-subscribed.

The Admiralty is forming a reserve of operators for wireless telegraphy.

A man named Beckert has been arrested on a charge of having embezzled £1000.

The London and Paris Exchange Company has been ordered to be compulsorily wound up.

King Edward has given a hundred guineas to the Salvation Army for work amongst the poor.

Another thousand men have, in response to the "Daily Mail's" appeal, joined the territorial army.

Orders for new ships aggregating 30,000 tons have been placed with Clyde builders. Full time has been resumed in some of the yards.

Lloyd's silver medal for bravery at sea has been conferred on Captain Ranson of the steamer Baltic, in connection with rescue from the wrecked liner Republic.

The engagement is announced of Lord Dalmeny, the eldest son of the Earl of Rosebery, to Dorothy, the daughter of Lord Henry Grosvenor.

The trustees of the late Mr James Dick, gutta-percha manufacturer, have allocated £80,000 to the Royal Infirmary of Glasgow, besides £250,000 to Glasgow charities.

Hafeld, one of the Russian workmen who ran amok between Tottenham and Walthamstow, and who was wounded by a shot from a constable's revolver, has succumbed to his injuries.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has ordered a Kentish vicar not to refuse communion to a married couple, on the ground that the woman had been innocently divorced from her husband.

Mr Shipley, a solicitor, has bequeathed £100,000 to various charitable organisations in Newcastle, besides 2500 pictures, including many old masters, and £30,000 for the enlargement of the art gallery.

A conference of the Radical Trade Union Co-operative Associations at Buxton Hall unanimously adopted a resolution urging the taxation of land values. Several members of the House of Commons who were present suggested a penny in the £ on the capital values.

Speaking at Plymouth, Mr J. A. Pease, chief Liberal Whip, declared that a general election would come before many months. The issue would be the abolition of the House of Lords' veto. He recommended a referendum whenever the Lords and Commons were in conflict.

Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood last week unveiled, in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral, MacKenna's marble bust of William Howard Russell, the famous Crimean war correspondent, surmounting an inscribed tablet. The subscriptions for the memorial totalled £500.

"The Times," discussing the Budget prospects, strongly hints that the Government may, in order to avoid the re-imposition of the sugar duty, agree to a naval loan, which, besides substantially relieving the taxpayer, will offer the collateral advantage of establishing certainty abroad regarding our future naval strength.

After the fire in the Chancery at Santiago, a body was found in the ruins. The remains were identified as those of a man named Porter, who, it is supposed, had absconded from London. He had been stabbed previously.

Admiral Lord Charles Beresford vacates command of the Channel Fleet on March 24, when the ships of the King Edward VII. class will be formed into the second division of Admiral Sir W. H. May's fleet, under the command of Vice-Admiral Sir A. Berkeley Milne.

The "Times" describes Mr. Bertram Mackennal's bust of William Howard Russell, the famous war correspondent, as one of the few thoroughly satisfactory works which St. Paul's crypt contains. It adds that sculptors generally recognise that Mr. Mackennal is one of the men most likely to further the advance made by sculpture in England during the past twenty years.

For the Workless.

The Church Socialists' League held a demonstration on Sunday in Trafalgar Square, the speakers including, besides several clergymen, Dr. Clifford, president of the Baptist World Alliance, and a number of other Nonconformist ministers.

Resolutions were passed urging the Government to take immediate steps to compel Mr. John Burns, President of the Local Government Board, to distribute the money voted for the relief of the unemployed, and also demanding that Parliament make the question of work or maintenance with training the first business of the session.

A Sudden Termination.

A man named Dunann McIntyre Johnson, who had a sum of £300 in his possession, was arrested while on his honeymoon trip aboard the White Star liner Suevic, which arrived at Plymouth from Melbourne on Saturday on a warrant accusing him of forging a telegram by means of which he obtained £100, with intent to defraud the firm of Youngshusband and Row, Melbourne.

Advertising the Army.

Extraordinary methods to catch territorials are being adopted in London. Regiments are arranging special marches to attract recruits, and in London mayors are delivering ten minutes' speeches in the music halls. An anonymous donor offers prizes from £100 downwards, for the largest number of recruits brought to the colours.

Lord Esher is arranging an Olympic athletic gathering, which will take place on Salisbury Plain during the territorials' encampment.

Possesses a Record.

Hafeld, one of the Russian workmen who ran amok between Tottenham and Walthamstow, and who was wounded by a shot from a constable's revolver, is recovering in hospital.

He has since been recognised as one of the assailants in the Glasgow bank outrage.

A Modest Hero.

John Burns, the heroic Marconi operator of the Republic, was the recipient of an address at the Guildhall.

Burns declared that he had done nothing more than his duty, while the real hero of the Republic collision was an engine hand, who, up to his neck in water, saved all aboard by opening the steam escape valve.

The White Star liner Republic was run down by the emigrant steamer Florida, and, in response to ethergrams, the Baltic arrived on the scene and all the passengers were saved. After she was taken in tow by the Baltic, the Republic suddenly flung her bow in the air and sank stern first. Soon after the collision, and in spite of the practical destruction of the deck-house of the Republic, John Burns, of Peterborough, England, the Marconi operator, stuck to his post and transmitted the messages which saved those on board. The roof and sides of the deck-house threatened to fall at any moment, but though it involved great peril Burns remained on the ship until the last. Tattersall, the operator on board the Baltic, was on duty for 56 hours, sending cheering messages to the Republic and communicating with the stations on shore.

Linking Up Pacific Islands.

The Pacific Radio Telegraph Company, with a capital of £20,000, has been registered. The object is to provide inter-communication between the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand.