

## SOUTH AFRICA.

Many burghers in the Orange River Colony refuse to leave the concentration camps, as they fear the hardships they may have to encounter in building up their farms. In order to compel their return the Government are reducing the scale of rations in the concentration camps.

The Boers without land in the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal are a source of serious difficulty to the Government.

Lord Milner has announced that no discrimination as regards naturalisation is intended to be exercised against Russian or other Jewish immigrants to South Africa.

The rupture of the Progressivists is complete, Sir Gordon Sprigg refusing any concessions regarding the colonial commission on martial law or the Sedition Bill, and declining to acquiesce in an early dissolution.

The Capetown Council has passed the Indemnity Bills.

Mr Merriman, in a violent speech, moved a resolution denouncing the movement for the suspension of the Constitution and applauding Sir Gordon Sprigg. He characterised Lord Milner's letter to the Governor of the Cape as a "blazing indiscretion." He condemned what he called the "damnable doctrine" that the Imperial Parliament was able to suspend the Constitution. Only force of arms would secure such suspension. He charged Lord Milner with conspiring to destroy the liberties of the Cape.

Dr. Smartt, in reply, said the Progressives would loyally abide by Mr Chamberlain's decision, and censured the malignant attack on Lord Milner.

The Chief Justice of Cape Colony declares the Imperial Commission on martial law amply sufficient to conduct the inquiry.

It is officially stated at Johannesburg that three millions sterling has been allotted as compensation charged to the Imperial Exchequer, also two millions for compensation to British subjects, natives, and foreigners who maintained neutrality. These are independent of the Military Board's payments.

Burghers are contentedly re-settling, their chief anxiety being to rebuild their homesteads. Material and transports are scarce, and there is great need of breeding stock. The burghers are not interested in politics.

## IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

At the Montreal banquet Sir E. Barton said the recent Conference of Premiers in London expressly affirmed the principle of trade preference. The autonomous colonies will do their best to give substantial preference to British products, trusting the United Kingdom as far as possible to seize such opportunities as may arise to give a return. No member of the conference tried to lay down a hard and fast rule or to demand an eye for an eye.

Sir John Forrest said Canada and Australia were bound to vastly increase in population, and would demand a voice in the policy of the empire beyond the sea. If they were unwilling to contribute towards Imperial defence they would be unable to ask or have a say. So far as Australia was concerned he would not be afraid to speak out.

Lord Minto said surely if the Motherland was pledged to support her dependencies to the last man, she might fairly claim some care for the efficiency of their military organisation. That could best be obtained by a strict recognition of the colonial forces as territorial armies for the defence of their own possessions, and garrisoning the parts of the Empire to which they belonged, but they should be garrisons upon whose commanders, organisation and efficiency the Imperial Government might justifiably rely in time of war.

Lord Minto's declaration is considered likely to provoke a crisis with Sir W. Laurier, followed by a general election, arraying the French-Canadians against the English provinces.

It is reported that Mr Chamberlain's first demands for Imperial defence would have involved a Canadian contribution of 2,000,000 dollars annually, with an equivalent sum from Australia.

## MR. SEDDON'S FAREWELL.

Mr Seddon, in a farewell message to the newspapers, thanked the Motherland for the hospitality extended to him, which New Zealand considered a compliment to itself. He hoped the confidence and goodwill now existing between the Motherland and the colonies would long continue, and trusted the recent conference would improve Imperial trade relationships and further ensure the stability of the Empire.

Mr Seddon assured a "Daily Express" interviewer that his most striking impression was surprise at Britain's apathy regarding the danger threatening her manufacturing supremacy. He condemns the conservatism of the manufacturers and their use of obsolete machinery. He was convinced America would adopt New Zealand's labour legislation, then England would follow suit. He believed the people in the colonies and the Motherland were more Imperialistic than those representing them.

The Hon. W. P. Reeves (Agent-General), and Hon. A. J. Cadman, Sir John Cockburn (South Australia), Sir John Kennaway, Colonels Cradock and Porter, a representative of the Colonial Office and many friends farewell Mr. Seddon at Paddington railway station.

Mr Chamberlain asked Mr Seddon to convey his best wishes to the people of New Zealand and said he would never forget the colony's services in South Africa. His parting with Mr Seddon was most friendly.

The Mayor welcomed Mr Seddon at Plymouth, where the Premier was interviewed and farewell. In a speech Mr Seddon stated that he had enjoyed his visit splendidly. Their generous hospitality had helped him to bear the terrible anxiety caused by his wife's illness. He did not intend to go up country in South Africa. The Imperial Conference was fairly satisfactory, though not Imperialistic enough. Representatives and members of Parliament exhibited strange nervousness and great objection to make progress with regard to any question. A permanent consultative colonial council, on the lines of the Indian Council, ought to be appointed. He strongly urged Mr Chamberlain and British statesmen to visit the colonies. A league ought to be formed to direct British immigrants to the colonies. War ought to be declared against combines in order to avert future disaster. He had strongly pressed for representation of the colonies upon the Commission of Inquiry into the war. He anticipated that the new Governor would make changes in Fiji which would improve the conditions of the natives. He advised Queensland and the Pacific Islands to grow cotton. He strongly advocated that the British and colonial newspapers should pass post free throughout the Empire.

Mr Seddon and his wife and daughter travel as the guests of the New Zealand Shipping Company. The Premier had an enthusiastic send-off at the docks, a great crowd being present.

## VOLCANIC ACTIVITY.

A Reuter message states that the eruption of Soufriere volcano, on the island of St. Vincent (West Indies), was accompanied by darkness and loud and rapid detonations, with a continuous terrible roar and incessant forked lightning, balls of fire bursting in meteor-like showers. A heavy fall of sand destroyed a number of arrowroot plantations. There were no fatalities.

The greater part of the Soufriere volcano, in St. Vincent, has been blown away by the continued eruptions, and the contour of the coast altered.

Rabucca River is a stream of fire a quarter of a mile wide.

The French Admiral in the West Indies has notified the disappearance of the island of Bermuda, in the Gulf of Mexico (no doubt caused by the recent great sub-marine and volcanic disturbances in the region).

Stromboli, in the Mediterranean, is in a state of high activity, besides Mount Vesuvius, which was stated a day or two ago to be threatening eruption. Kilauca, the great volcano

in the Hawaiian Islands (the largest active volcano in the world), is in active eruption, as also are two volcanoes in Alaska.

## THE UNREST IN IRELAND.

The editor and publisher of the "Irish People" have been summoned under the Crimes Act on a charge of intimidation.

The staff of "The Irish People" were summoned under the Crimes Act for intimidating tenants who have taken evicted farms.

Midnight outrages have been perpetrated on the De Freyne estate, Roscommon.

A number of moonlighters burnt a hayrick, and completely wrecked the conservatory of a mansion purchased by the Congested Districts Board.

## THE SHEARERS' STRIKE.

The Australian Workers' Union has declared the shearers' strike off, and the members have been instructed to accept the Pastoralist Union's agreement. Want of funds and legal proceedings are given as the reason for terminating the strike.

## THE MOUNT KEMBLA DISASTER.

Another victim of the Mount Kembra disaster is dead, making 95. Two others are still in a precarious state.

Mr Ritchie, the miners' secretary, at Mt. Kembra, says he is satisfied that the disaster was caused by gas in the first instance, added to by coal dust. There were few safety lamps in the mine, and they were in a bad state; the oil used was of bad quality and the wicks were unsuitable.

The evidence of miners shows the presence of gas at Mount Kembra was common talk in the mine for years past.

The chief inspector of collieries, in his evidence, said he found gas in various parts of Mount Kembra after the accident.

The inspector of collieries has formed two theories. One is that a fall of stone dislodged the gas, the other that Morris and his son had ignited a small quantity of fire-damp in the heading where they were working. This raised coal-dust, and drove it over a naked light, causing a greater explosion. The indications are conflicting, and he is unable to give one theory greater credence than the other. His view is that a small percentage of gas would cause a dust explosion, a quantity so small, indeed, that the ordinary safety lamp would fail to detect its presence.

The jury at the inquiry into the Mount Kembra mine disaster found that the deaths were due to carbon monoxide, produced by the explosion of fire-damp, ignited by the naked lights used in the mine, and accelerated by a series of explosions of coal dust.

## THE TROOPERS' SCANDAL.

Captain Coutts, of New Zealand, one of the recipients of the Queen's scarf, is now in Melbourne, as also is another New Zealand soldier Sergt. Watts. He says that the story, as given in the New Zealand press, about the melée with the Munster Fusiliers, at Newcastle, in South Africa, is absolutely untrue. The disturbance was of the most trivial character. Only three New Zealanders were implicated, and no one was killed. The whole trouble was due to the action of some of the Fusiliers. Only fifteen men took part in the affray. Captain Dalrymple, another New Zealander, also declares that the account is exaggerated.

## THE BOER DEMANDS.

The Boer generals have sailed for The Hague.

Mr Chamberlain refused their request that the refugees be allowed to return without swearing allegiance, and declined to reappoint certain Boer officials to their old positions.

It is believed the generals are organising an extensive lecturing tour in Britain, America, and Europe in an irreconcilable spirit.

A Parliamentary paper gives details of the conference with the Boer generals.

In a letter dated August 20 they formally requested an interview, and submitted a list containing eleven points for consideration, including

an amnesty to all British subjects who fought against the Crown, pensions for widows and orphans of burghers, equal rights for the Dutch and English languages in schools and courts, the reinstatement of the officials of the late Republics in the service, or compensation for the loss of office, and compensation for all loss occasioned the burghers by the war.

Mr Chamberlain replied that he was greatly surprised at the manner and character of the proposals, which virtually re-opened the peace treaty. He absolutely refused to entertain the requests, but was willing to give further consideration to the manner of carrying out the Vereeniging terms.

The Boer generals asked for the retrocession of the territory ceded to Natal, protested against the compulsory administration of the oath of allegiance to burghers, and expressed their dissatisfaction at the absence of a Coronation amnesty.

Mr Chamberlain declined to grant them an interview until the disposition to re-open the terms of surrender was abandoned. He stated that the Imperial Government would not hinder any generous intentions that Natal and the Cape may have regarding rebels. He referred to Mr. Reitz's hostile speeches as justifying his exclusion from South Africa. Botha said it was unfair to visit the sins and follies of one man on others. Let, he said, the offender suffer. He appealed to Mr. Chamberlain to trust the surrenderers.

Mr Chamberlain said: "We trust them entirely, and will do so until they give us reason to doubt them." He assured Botha there would be no compulsory acquisition of land for colonisation without ample opportunities being given for criticism.

Mr Chamberlain agreed to re-transfer three farms which the Government had acquired.

Botha complained of the constitution of the commissions entrusted with the distribution of the three million grant, and asked for further assistance.

Mr Chamberlain could not recognise the justice of the complaint, but was willing to investigate specific charges. He reminded the general that Britain's magnanimity and generosity towards the conquered had never been equalled, and advised them not to press for more. He declined to recognise the burghers' rights granted during the war, and appealed to them to forget and forgive, and co-operate in working for the prosperity and liberty of South Africa. How soon complete autonomy would be granted would depend entirely on the rapidity with which animosities died out.

The newspapers characterised the generals' proposals as audacious and astonishing, and consider them to have been inspired by the Transvaal Legation. They applaud Mr Chamberlain's courtesy, tactfulness and firmness.

Cape residents are amazed at the Boer generals' wildly extravagant demands.

The Royal Commission on the Boer war will consist of Lord Elgin, Mr. Asher, M.P., Sir G. Taubman Goldie, Sir Henry Norman, Admiral Hopkins, Sir John Edge and Sir John Jackson.

American opinion is amazed at the Boer generals' disregard of the peace settlement, and applauds Mr Chamberlain's admirably calm reply.

French and German papers reluctantly admit that Mr Chamberlain was compelled to refuse many of the proposals, and consider his great generosity the better policy.

The generals were quietly welcomed at Amsterdam.

De la Rey stated that he required help to reconstruct the Boers' farms, not homage or fetes.

De Wet said the Boers intended to remain faithful and submissive subjects now, and in future intended to defend their rights by word and pen. If England was generous the Boers would prove the most faithful subjects of the whole Empire. They wanted money for schools, which would safeguard their nationality.

Botha said he feared the British Government would not give compensation for burnt farms, though thousands would otherwise be ruined.