

these railways could not give their full return on their outlay. He realised that the present railways fell far short of the requirements of the future: many hundreds—or, he should say, thousands—of miles had yet to be made. There was one line in particular, and for its inauguration the present Government was not responsible, which paid only about 77 per cent on a very large sum, about two millions. The fact of the loss on that line was being used against the whole railway system—the South Island particularly—as though the whole of them did not pay. If the Government were to undertake to make all the railways wherever a guarantee was given to make up any loss up to 3 1/2 per cent, it would require to spend a very large amount, perhaps 20 millions in one year. The duty of the Government, however, was to protect the people against themselves. If New Zealand wanted to preserve its good name financially, it should not go in for over-railroading, even although guarantees were offered.

April Exports.

The value of the New Zealand principal products exported during the fortnight ended April 15 is £1,337,181. For the full month of April last year the value was £1,532,755. The principal items in the past fortnight's total are:—Wool, £432,703; gold, £94,129; tallow, £61,933; skins, £54,973; butter, £134,779; cheese, £113,278; frozen beef, £41,596; mutton, £108,036; and lamb, £207,676.

AUCKLAND.

A Check on Hasty Action.

"When it comes to a question of a strike, I think the wives should have a right to vote as well as the husbands," said Mr. E. Tregear, Secretary for Labour, when speaking to a "Star" representative. Mr. Tregear said he did not wish to appear to be in any way interfering with the internal working of any union, but he would regard it as a good thing if trades unions could find some way whereby the married men could have a more weighty vote in case of a proposal to strike. "I feel quite convinced," added the under-secretary, "that the small strikes that have taken place in the Dominion within the last four or five years have been in almost every case precipitated by the more thoughtless members of the union, and that in very many cases married men have been dragged into striking unwillingly. They have had to suffer as if they were fully responsible for a hasty and unconsidered action."

£225,000 Loan Authorised.

Evidently the ratepayers of Auckland were content to accept the recommendation of the City Council that £225,000 was required to carry out the electrical scheme, as only 542 votes were recorded. Of that number, 390 favoured the loan and 146 were against it, the remaining six being informal. As only a bare majority of the votes recorded were required to authorise the loan, Mr. T. Usher (returning officer) declared the proposals carried.

Strange Tidal Wave.

A tidal phenomenon is reported from Hokianga. On last Saturday week the sea rose and receded in an alarming manner. The occurrence is attributed, by some, to a submarine seismic disturbance.

The Marine Department received the following telegram from Captain Hardy, harbourmaster at Hokianga: "On Saturday afternoon there was a tremendous sea on the bar, from no apparent cause, from one hour before high water to two hours after same. The Hokianga River rose above high water mark of the highest spring tides, and immediately receded below low water mark of the neap tides, the river continuously rising and falling like this for two hours after high water. The highest mark was reached one hour after high water. The boats were filled with water, and the boats floated a foot off the roof of the shed. No damage resulted."

Mr. G. Allport, secretary of the Marine Department, stated to a "Times" representative that according to the reference to the boats floating within a foot of the roof of the shed the water must have been fully six feet higher than the highest spring tide. It is a peculiar fact that the tides are neaps at present. On May 11th, 1877, a seismic tidal

wave swept along the New Zealand coast from Bluff to Russell. At Wellington the tide ebbed and flowed every twenty minutes from two to four feet for fully twenty-four hours. Vessels at sea off the coast reported having experienced the phenomenon. This disturbance, it was reported at the time, originated off the South American coast, and the town of Iquique, in Peru, was destroyed for the second time in nine years. Two days were occupied in the waves crossing the Pacific.

On August 16th, 1868, a similar visitation was observed on the New Zealand coast.

Prehistoric Man in New Zealand.

Mr. Clement Wragge, in the course of an interview with a "Star" representative last week, made a reply to criticisms levelled from all parts of the Dominion at his theory of evidence of the existence of prehistoric man in New Zealand. "I am as sure as it is possible to be sure about anything, that this country has been inhabited by prehistoric man," said Mr. Wragge, "and that the stones I came across in the North have been manipulated. Of course, all rocks are natural. The famous rocks of Stonehenge, the Pyramids of Egypt, Easter Island and other historical stone temples have originally been formed by nature, and then manipulated by the hands of man. So with these rocks which I recently examined in the North. They are natural plutonic rock, subsequently manipulated. I do not care what people may say, or how people may criticise. The sensitive photographic plate cannot lie, and I do not think my greatest critic will suggest that I would fake a photo. These plates (and Mr. Wragge held them up for inspection) show a distinct triangle, cups, and crosses, besides extraordinary formations, which no one can attribute to anything else but human agency. I can afford to treat the criticism levelled at my deductions just as Professor Bickerton looks on criticism of his law of partial impact. I smile at them all. Mr. Hamilton, of Wellington, is one of those sceptical of my discovery. It has to be remembered, however, that he was never near the spot where I located these particular rocks. His investigation was conducted in the vicinity of Onaonai, and that is distant 15 miles in a straight line, as the crow flies, from where I made my discovery. Measured by scale, the rocks which he examined, and on which he bases his criticism of my discovery, are situated about 20 miles one way by road and water from my find, and 25 miles by another route. So that he was not within 18 miles of the rocks on which I base my contention of evidence of prehistoric man in New Zealand. My discovery was near Korikeri, and while I do not say that others have not been over the same ground, I went, knowing what I was looking for, and was in consequence able to understand the significance of these things, when I alighted upon the rocks, which I am absolutely certain bear testimony of the existence of prehistoric man in this country."

Mr. Wragge leaves for Tasmania shortly, on purpose to view the total eclipse of the sun on May 9th. He will visit Australia, and then return to New Zealand and pursue further investigations in the North in search of additional evidence of the existence of early man. Mr. Wragge says he has been informed of a certain cave, supposed to contain evidences of human remains and bones bigger than the bones of the man of this day. "There is no reason why this should not be," added Mr. Wragge. "Just as you have evidence of the existence of the moa, and I hope to go thoroughly into the whole question on my return to the Dominion."

Post and Telegraph Business.

The postal and telegraph revenue for the quarter ended March 31st last totalled £224,585, compared with £225,763 in the corresponding quarter of last year. Deposits in the Post Office Savings banks during the first quarter of this year totalled £2,634,034, and withdrawals £2,377,896, or an excess of deposits over withdrawals of £157,238. The figures for the first quarter of 1909 are: Deposits, £2,486,462; withdrawals, £2,465,957; and excess of deposits over withdrawals, £20,505.

A Destructive Fire.

A fire that affected four business firms along the water-front in Customs-street West, almost directly at the foot of

Albert-street, occurred on Wednesday evening, and accounted for a considerable loss of property. The fire originated in the shipbuilding establishment of Mr C. Bailey, jun., and besides burning out Mr A. R. Bailey, ship and engine smith, who occupied a shop in the same premises, spread to the adjoining building, owned by Messrs Tyler and Harvey, who carried on business as shipbuilders in one portion, and Mr C. P. Murdoch, wood turner and machinist, in the other. Mr C. Bailey will be a heavy loser by the fire. The building, which was his property, was uninsured, but he had two separate policies of £500 each on boats under construction and on plant and stock in the New Zealand Insurance Office. Mr A. R. Bailey had his stock and plant covered by a policy of £100 in the Alliance Office, but he estimates his loss at about £200 over the insurance. Messrs Tyler and Harvey's shop and contents carried a policy of £100, but the firm state that the damage suffered can be made good by the expenditure of about £25.

Copper Mining.

For the past three or four years Ferguson's Mining and Smelting Company, Ltd., formerly known as Ferguson's Syndicate, has been straggling against odds to set smelting and copper mining among New Zealand's profitable industries, and when, after an early infancy beset with difficulties, the company some time ago erected a smelting plant and other machinery at a cost of something in the vicinity of £20,000, many of the shareholders felt at long last that fortune was about to shower her golden smiles on the enterprise. But, although it seemed to be generally conceded that the company's properties were valuable, and it was fairly proven that with the necessary material to provide a supply of flux an excellent matte of mineral could be produced, the cost of working and the insufficient quantity of ore in immediate reach upset all calculations. Yesterday afternoon, at the annual meeting of shareholders, something of a climax was reached when the chairman of directors (Mr J. M. Mennie) announced that as the result of reports by experts sent across by the Electrolytic Smelting Company of Australia, the biggest and wealthiest company of the kind south of the line, negotiations for the purchase of an interest by that corporation had fallen through, and there seemed nothing left for Ferguson's Company but to voluntarily wind up. Counter-proposals suggesting reconstruction were advanced and discussed, and the meeting adjourned without arriving at a conclusion.

Booming Auckland.

When Mr. Harold Beauchamp returned to Wellington from an official visit to Auckland some time ago, he expressed his amazement at the wonderful strides made throughout the Auckland province, and spoke eulogistically of the bright prospects in store for it. Mr. Beauchamp has just made another visit to Auckland, and his observations only went to confirm the impressions he had formed on the occasion of his former visit.

In conversation with a "Post" reporter on the subject of Auckland's rosy prospects, Mr. Beauchamp said: "There will, I estimate, be an expenditure on public works there of about a million a year for some years to come. The City Council is to spend a quarter of a million of loan money on electric lighting extension, and about the same amount on the first portion of the drainage scheme. Then the Government is spending £109,000 on the new district post office. The new railway station will also mean the distribution of a large amount of money on labour before it is completed, for it is a most extensive undertaking. There

are, too, the great harbour works going on, the new Town Hall, and other Harbour Board and corporation works in hand."

"The active development of the Waikato," said Mr. Beauchamp, "is bringing much wealth into the district, and Auckland city is naturally reaping the benefit. The opening up of the Maori lands in the King Country should add materially to the growth and importance of Auckland, and I do not see any reason to fear for a steady run of prosperity for some years. So far as the Northern capital is concerned."

Oysters Off.

Those who relish the delectable oyster will be much concerned to learn that no North Island oysters are to be picked for a year to come. With the beginning of next month the oyster season should open, but the Marine Department has decided that it is in the best interests of the industry that no picking should be done for the next twelve months, and a close season has been declared accordingly. Two years ago the Government decided that in order to prevent the ruthless destruction of oyster beds, the general public should not be allowed access to the oyster deposits in different parts of the Dominion. Private enterprise was promptly checked, and all picking was done under Government supervision, the market being supplied throughout the season solely through the Government depot. The first year that the new scheme was brought into operation, 11,500 sacks were picked off the beds at Waikato, Puni, Sandspit, Great Barrier, and Bay of Islands. The amount realised by the sale of this first season's picking was £6938, and resulted

District Lands Office, Auckland, 10th April, 1910. IT is hereby notified that the undermentioned lands will be offered for sale by public auction at this office, on Friday, 27th May, 1910, at 11 a.m. TOWN OF WOLSELEY (near Avondale, Auckland), 34 lots, quarter to half acre in area; upset prices per lot from £7 10s to £18. VILLAGE WAHIOU (near Kawakawa), 2 lots, 3 roads to 1/2 acre; upset prices, 35s to £7 10s per lot. VILLAGE OF MAMARI (near Broadwood) 9 lots, 2 acres to 4 acres in each; upset prices £9 to £14 per lot. PARISH TAKAKA, Lot 10, 100 acres; upset £22, 3 miles from Takanu Railway Station. Poster plans and full details on application to ERIC C. GOLD SMITH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.

HAURAKI PLAINS. FIRST AND SECOND CLASS LANDS FOR SETTLEMENT.

GOVERNMENT are offering the following land for application and by public auction on FRIDAY, 10th MAY, 1910:— COUNTRY LANDS.—16,700 acres comprising 104 first and second class sections to be opened under the Optional Tenures of the Land Act. Areas from 50 to 201 acres and rentals from £12 to £31 per annum according to tenure. TOWN LANDS.—100 acres in 71 lots ranging from 1 road to 2 acres to be offered for sale for cash by auction. Upset prices from £20 to £150 per lot. The areas for selection are generally about the foreshore of Birth of Thames, between Waitakara and Puke Rivers, and also extend for some miles up the west bank of the latter. Access from the Thames by launch, also from Pukekohe and Waiorongu railway stations by road. The lands are all partly drained swamp consisting almost entirely of very good alluvial clay deposit on sand and gravel formation. Plans will be laid out in books as to boundaries, areas, rentals, roads, gullies, etc., obtainable on application to the District Lands Office, Auckland. ERIC C. GOLD SMITH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.

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