

The Brussels Fire.

LONDON, August 19.

After reading through the mass of eabled and written intelligence concerning the Brussels Exhibition fire, it is impossible to come to any other conclusion than that we have yet to learn the true extent of the damage done. That the accounts we have received in England concerning the conflagration have erred considerably on the side of exaggeration there can be no manner of doubt. All the talk of "priceless art treasures" having been consumed was practically so much clap-trap, for we now have it on the authority of the chairman of the British Royal Commission at the Exhibition that no pictures, ancient or modern, were contained in the British section destroyed, that the collection of old English furniture was a small one, the value of which is fully covered by insurance at about £25,000, and that the destroyed loan collection from the Victoria and Albert Museum of "the finest specimens of English gold and silver work" were mere electro reproductions!

Estimates of the damage done by the fire reached £5,000,000, but when the cold truth is come at, it appears that the real amount will not be more than a tenth of that sum. Moreover, we have the word of the President of the Executive Committee of the Exhibition that "in a fortnight the remains of the fire will be no longer seen. The President deprecates the exaggerated language in which the fire has been "written up" by the Press, and his business-like description of the actual scope of the fire reads queerly alongside the sensational accounts furnished by some of the correspondents of London newspapers.

One thing brought clearly before the mind by the fire is the terrible danger to the public created by the erection of flimsy lath and plaster buildings for exhibition purposes. Of those destroyed at Brussels nothing remains but the distorted iron framework. All the rest went up in sparks and smoke, in an incredibly short space of time. The moment a building was attacked it was doomed. The fire enveloped it with such lightning rapidity that one Colonial visitor who saw the conflagration remarked: "The fire couldn't have travelled much faster if the place had been drenched with kerosene."

Apparently none of the inflammable material used in the buildings had been treated in any way to make it fire-resisting. Moreover, it is stated, apparently on unimpeachable authority, that the fire appliances at the Exhibition were miserably inadequate, kept in a state of utter unreadiness, and that when they could be brought into operation the pressure of water in the fire mains was such that the jets from the fire hose would hardly reach an object 30 feet away from the nozzle.

Happily, so far as is known, not a single person was killed, or even seriously hurt by the fire, which occurred after the destroyed buildings had been closed to the public for the night. Had the fire broken out a few hours earlier, the chances are that it would have involved a loss of human life far greater than that caused by the great Paris char-

perhaps be best shown by a letter which he has addressed to the President of the Local Government Board, Mr. John Burns, to whom Mr. Sedgwick first broached his scheme and with whom he has been in regular communication on the subject since his return from the Dominion.

To Mr. Burns he wrote last Friday: "They (the Central Unemployed Body) decline to co-operate unless all the individuals of the party are selected by them, as well as passed by me on behalf of New Zealand. This would bar any provincial lad, boy under 18, or person in badly paid work at present being of the party. The Board, however, could not say how long such selection would take, as all the applications have to be received through the local distress committees.

"If the distress committee under whose aegis most of the selected cases would come, is typical of the others, the case is quite hopeless.

"I had seen over twenty most suitable lads in one borough, and therefore called at that local distress office. I was informed that no cases could be entertained under 18 years of age, and that casual and blind-alley workers, if considered at all, would be 'strangled with red-tape,' notwithstanding the facts that your Board have ruled that such lads, when upwards of 15 years, are eligible under the Act of 1905, and that the colonial farmers in many districts prefer them at the younger age, and they regard a lad who has worked as van and shop boy, in jam, lank and wire-rope works, in oil-works, lead or saw-mills (according to the demand for his labour) as more versatile, adaptable and likely to succeed than one who has spent his whole time at one or perhaps two jobs. The latter would, moreover, be far more prone to drift into his old trade in the towns. As the season is rapidly approaching, the necessity for expedition is recognised; but the secretary informed me that it might be December 31 before they were passed, as after they had been accepted on behalf of the Dominion, each case would occupy at least twenty-four hours for official investigations, and special inquiry officers would have to be engaged. The whole work of the committee was in a state of suspended animation, and, although the limited period, when lads are most needed on the dairy and other farms of the Southern Hemisphere, is now commencing, the new registers had not even been received from the lead office.

"I therefore write to inquire whether you can suggest any other source whence the necessary £600 for fares (repayable) and outfit for the 50 lads can be obtained. Otherwise I am afraid that this first and only offer of reciprocation in migration received from the overseas Dominions will have to be rejected.

"As you know, I regard this matter as of so paramount importance to all concerned that I have spent upwards of £100 of my own money—which was all I had—and borrowed an additional £50 to go and secure this truly patriotic offer from the Government of New Zealand, and it would be an Imperial disaster if it now fell through.

"Only those who have both lived amidst the hideous poverty of East London and other parts and seen the abundance of everything save labour in the glorious lands of New Zealand can realise what a difference £600 would make for 50 lads, the friends they would get out to them, and their posterity."

On Mr. Burns' reply to this letter will depend Mr. Sedgwick's future course of action. It must be said for him that the unsympathetic attitude of the Central Unemployed Body has not in the least damped his ardour. On the contrary, it has in vulgar parlance "put his back up," and unless the intervention of Mr. Burns produces favourable results from the Central Body, Mr. Sedgwick intends to try the effect of a newspaper campaign.

It is said that the proprietor of a certain widely read London newspaper is not at all averse from opening his columns to an appeal for funds in furtherance of Mr. Sedgwick's scheme, provided that it is made applicable to all our overseas possessions and not restricted to any particular area.

In addition to sounding the possibilities of newspaperland, Mr. Sedgwick is submitting his scheme in detail to a number of influential and wealthy men who have first-hand knowledge of New Zealand, and he is soliciting that whatever assistance the Central Unemployed Body may eventually consent to give him, he will be able to fulfil the task he has set himself on the lines of his own programme.

One thing Mr. Sedgwick feels that he

Was Dickmann a Double Murderer?

Carnarvon Bay Wreck.

GRAPHIC STORY OF THE DISASTER.

MELBOURNE, September 19.

The full-rigged ship Carnarvon Bay, 1795 tons, bound from Liverpool to Sydney, struck a reef to the south east of King Island during a heavy gale on Thursday last. She was abandoned in the evening by Captain Griffiths and the crew.

The captain, with the second and third mates, and 14 of the crew, were picked up in an open boat by the steamer Tararua, on Saturday afternoon, off Cape Fitzroy, near Wilson's Promontory. The first mate, 13 of the crew, and a passenger, who got away in another boat, have still to be accounted for.

In his account of the disaster, Captain Griffiths said: "We were holding up to east by north course when the ship struck, just before I had time to look at the standard compass and found that she had been coming up higher than her course, set by the after compass. I had told the man at the wheel to let her fall off half a point. Just as I gave him that order the ship started to graze on the reef, and almost immediately to lump. The bumping was comparatively slight for a few minutes. Then she started to bang. In another instant she was bumping all over. The vessel began continuously to bump. I sang out to the mate to swing up his port boat and to pass it over to the starboard, or lee, side of the ship. Meantime, the starboard boat was swung into the water, and I was hanging on to the side.

"Some of the men must have tumbled into her as soon as they had launched her. I called for a carpenter to sound the bell. He was not there. I afterwards found that he was in the boat. I went along the deck to try and find the sounding rod, but I could not see it. By this time the ship was hard and fast, but still bumping heavily. The men had clambered into the boats and the port boat had cast off from the ship and pulled out. Five or six men were in it. I called out for them to come in and take some of the men from the starboard boat in with them. At that time there were only the first, second, and third mates and one of the apprentices and myself on deck. The men said that they would not come alongside as it was too dangerous. I don't think it was. They said they were frightened of the masts falling on them. The masts, I may say, were standing well when last we saw the ship.

"I went downstairs to get the papers. The men were singing out while I was gone. 'Let go the boats or the mast will come over on us.' When I came on deck again the starboard boat was still hanging to her. The first, second and third mates and the apprentices were still on deck. We all got over the side into the starboard boat, and pushed away from the ship. I sang out to the port boat to take half of our men away. Altogether there were 31 in the crew, and one passenger, but whether the passenger was in our boat or the boat with the mate I cannot now recollect. When we got some distance from the ship the port boat came alongside, and the chief officer and nearly half our men clambered into it. I called out to the mate, who had taken charge, with the bosun under him, to hang on to the shore for the night, and try and find a landing place on the east end of the island at daybreak.

"Three minutes after we lost sight of them, the last we saw of them the mate was steering for the east side of the island, where there is a sandy beach. We tried to make after him, but his boat could go better to windward than ours, and we could not make way towards the east end of the island. I then decided to run for Launceston after daybreak, hoping to keep the ship in sight as long as possible, to see whether she was in any great danger. At about 10 p.m. the gale, which had been blowing from the west, turned to the south-west, and came up with tremendously increased force. I quickly realised we would never be able to make the Tasmanian coast, so I decided to make for Port Phillip.

"We ran all that night before the gale in a tremendous sea, with our oars, heading us far as we could to the north. At about 5 o'clock on Friday morning the gale began to abate, and we set a sail. By 7 o'clock it completely died away. Later it sprang up again from the north, but in the afternoon backed round to the north-west. All this time we were hauling out and fighting our way through a nasty cross sea. The boat was 22ft long, and was taking in water rapidly. At 11 o'clock on Saturday morning we sighted

The latter was ill with a dangerous chill, and his breath came in rattling "snorts," they said, just hung by a "thread."

For the doctor had murmured "no chance."

No words can express "press" his awful distress. But it "seems" that he put up a fight; he took the thing sure, the Woods' Pepper mint Cure.

"Sew," "needless" to say, he got right.

Town Lads for N.Z. Farms.

MR. SEDGWICK'S DIFFICULT TASK.

LONDON, August 19.

Mr. Thomas E. Sedgwick appears to be finding considerable difficulty in arranging for the emigration of the 50 town lads he was empowered by the New Zealand Government to select as a trial party for New Zealand farms. The Dominion Government is prepared to grant the lads assisted passages, and I understand, to guarantee to find them work and to keep a fatherly eye upon them until such time as they may be safely permitted to paddle their own canoes.

Beyond the amount represented by the New Zealand Government's assistance, however, Mr. Sedgwick estimates that he will require some £100 in order to pay the balance of passage money, provide each lad with a decent outfit and to cover incidental expenses in connection with their emigration.

This amount, or some part thereof, Mr. Sedgwick designed to obtain from the Central Unemployed Body for London, but as a result of almost daily communication with that body he seems to be on the point of ignoring them and making an appeal to public philanthropy for the desired sum.

The attitude of the Central Unemployed Body towards Mr Sedgwick's scheme may