

Gold and Silver Exports.

The export of gold from the Dominion for ten months ending October 31 last was 404,694ozs, valued at £1,801,113—a decrease compared with the return for the same period last year of 17,730ozs, valued at £78,101. During the month of October 31,870ozs of gold, valued at £126,236, were exported, being a decrease of 18,081ozs, valued at £72,130. The total quantity of silver exported in the first ten months of the present year was 1,448,222ozs, valued at £145,150, which was a decrease of 56,178ozs, of the value of £4840. The export silver in October was 124,786ozs, valued at £12,524, being a decrease of 28,381ozs, valued at £2,757, as compared with the corresponding month of last year.

"Dry Waihi."

Judging by the general opinion among miners, there is a very strong and growing feeling in Waihi that "license" will be won back at next year's local option poll. As far as can be gathered, this is the outcome of the harassing conditions which exist under no-license in regard to procuring liquor, also as the result of the large number of prosecutions in this connection, which will probably top the list for the whole of the Dominion. Many are of opinion that it would be far better to have straight-out national prohibition than to continue under the provisions of no-license legislation as it now stands.

Care of the Insane.

A rather interesting reply was given by the Hon. D. Buddo to Mr. Bolland last week, respecting the questions of discipline and conduct in mental asylums.

The member for Eden asked the acting-Minister in Charge of Mental Hospitals whether he would set appeal boards in connection with these institutions, so that attendants might be able to bring their grievances—such as long hours and other matters—before the said boards.

The Minister replied that any attendant considering himself aggrieved could, under existing circumstances, without prejudice to himself, have the matter complained of inquired into. The Hon. Mr. Fowlds, for whom at present he was acting, and with whose opinion on this matter expressed last year he agreed, pointed out that the position of mental hospital employees was different to that of employees in other departments, who had to deal with persons possessed of their reason, free agents able to defend themselves and make trustworthy complaint. The subversion of discipline which would follow the replacement by an appeal board of an attendant who had been dismissed or retired on the evidence of patients, would lead to a terrorising of the patients, and make such as were able to give evidence silent in the future. As a natural consequence, dismissals would follow only where an attendant was caught by two sane witnesses striking a patient or otherwise misconducting himself. The case of a good attendant would not be dealt with by such a board. The superintendents who were responsible for the care and treatment of patients knew the value of good attendants and the desirability of retaining their services, but the board would in practice have to review the case of the inefficient and the indifferent attendants, persons on whom the responsible officer would feel he could not rely for proper supervision for humane care and for intelligent co-operation in the treatment of the patients.

The Forgotten Dead.

"Will the Prime Minister place on the Estimates a sum of £500 as a grant to the Victoria League of Auckland for the purpose of renovating and putting and maintaining in proper order the graves of those who were killed in the Maori war?" asked Mr. A. M. Myers in the House of Representatives last week. The member for Auckland East further pointed out that in Symonds-street Cemetery there was a plot in which some 80 or 90 men who had fallen in the Maori war were buried, and there was not a peg or hand-mark to indicate the graves.

Sir Joseph Ward replied that for all practical purposes the cemetery in question has long been closed to burials save

in exceptional cases, and being well planted and attractively laid out, it is largely frequented by the citizens of Auckland and visitors. The City Council has taken part of the area for bridge purposes, or otherwise for the benefit of the city, and it is felt that the care of the cemetery is peculiarly a case where the public spirit of the Auckland City Council and the Auckland citizens should be demonstrated by their keeping the graves of war veterans and other persons who deserved well of the community in a fitting state of repair, without having recourse to the Government for assistance.

Mr. W. Jennings said that though a hundred men had fallen at Pakiaukeruru there was nothing to mark their graves. At Te Awamutu and other places neglect had been shown in the care of the last resting places of soldiers.

Mr. Vernon Reed said there were localities in the Bay of Islands district which required attention.

Mr. Massey urged that with surpluses the country could surely spare a few hundred pounds to mark the graves of the men who had fought for their land. He hoped to see a sum placed on the Supplementary Estimates before the session closed.

Town Planning.

Some controversy has taken place through the correspondence columns of the "Evening Post" regarding Mr. A. M. Myers' town-planning scheme. In reply, the member for Auckland East has written on the subject as follows:

"My experience when it was my privilege to act in the capacity of Mayor of Auckland directed my attention to the importance of this question, and this was confirmed by my observations during my recent travels in Britain and on the continent of Europe, particularly in Germany, where I had an opportunity of seeing what has been accomplished by systematic action by the municipal authorities in Berlin, Frankfurt and elsewhere. In view of the rapid expansion of our cities, and the great future that we may reasonably anticipate for them, it is urgently necessary that steps should be taken to avoid the evils that have arisen in the past owing to cities growing up without any definite plan or policy. Every year's delay in dealing with this problem means an increase in the expense, and if left too long the cost will be enormous. I trust that the Government will see its way to take the matter up next session, but, in any case, I would venture to suggest that there is a great deal of useful preliminary work that might well be undertaken by the municipal authorities without waiting for the Government. In an interview on my return from England, I suggested that a small committee might be set up in Auckland to draw up a scheme for the planning of what must come, a greater Auckland, and the formation and maintenance of roads which carry the principal traffic to and from the city within a radius of say ten miles, and I should like to see such a committee of experts set up in every town in New Zealand to draw up plans for its future development, making adequate provision for roads, parks, artisans' dwellings, schools, churches and other public requirements. A combined request from such committees for legislation to enable the municipal authorities to put their plans into execution could hardly be ignored by the Government, and the information they had collected would be of great service in drawing up the necessary bill.—I am etc., (signed) A. M. MYERS."

Bad Liquor.

The member for Auckland West (Mr C. H. Poole) last week asked the Minister of Public Health whether, in view of the number of sailors, firemen, and others overcome by the use of bad liquor in the various ports of the Dominion, he will take steps to have a proper examination of the liquor supplied, so as to prevent a good deal of sickness and save trouble to the people who are responsible for order and efficiency.

The Hon. Mr Buddo replied that samples of spirits are taken by officers of the Department under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1908, and submitted to the Government analyst for examination. If any case of adulteration of liquor is reported to the Department and considered suitable for a prosecution, proceedings will be taken.

Mr Poole: It frequently happened ves-

sels loaded down to the Plimsoll line and ready to sail to catch an early market, were delayed while members of their crews could be hunted up. The custom of British crews to come back the worse for liquor was encouraging steamship companies to employ coloured and foreign crews. He had never heard of a prosecution under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act for selling impure liquor, and he thought there was necessity for more stringent examination of liquor.

Liquor in the Cook Islands.

Mr. Wright asked the Minister of Cook and other Islands by what authority alcoholic liquor was sold to Europeans by the Collector of Customs at Rarotonga for other than the reasons given in section 277 of the Licensing Act, which provides that liquor shall only be sold and supplied in the Cook Islands for use in the arts of manufactures or for medicinal, religious, or scientific purposes, but not for any other use or purpose. The Hon. Mr Carroll replied that he was not aware that the Collector of Customs at Rarotonga sold liquor to Europeans, but he had called for a full report upon the whole subject.

State Advances.

In moving the second reading of the Local Bodies Loan Act Amendment Bill, Sir Joseph Ward explained that the object of the bill was to remove certain cases of hardship suffered by some local bodies as the result of the passing of the State Guaranteed Advances Act. Provision was made in the bill to make it retrospective, and the procedure covering meetings of ratepayers regarding loan proposals was simplified. The term for loans was to be extended from 36½ years to 50 years if desired.

Mr. Massey suggested that in some cases the ratepayers should be able to express their desire for a loan by petition.

Sir Joseph Ward said that already £1,239,601 had been authorised as loans to local bodies at 3½ per cent. That was in eight months. The local bodies were now out of the reach of the usurer who might want to bleed them and take advantage of their necessities. Under the old Loans to Local Bodies Act, the highest amount ever lent in any one year was £180,000. The total amount already advanced under the Advances to Settlers Act, the Advances to Workers Act and the State Guaranteed Advances Act was £12,037,751. Of the settlers put through its second reading.

Anti-trust Legislation.

"The essential justification for anti-trust legislation is that the monopoly and the trust can levy taxation without representation, since they can put up prices without consulting the consumers," said the Hon. Dr. Findlay, when the Commercial Trusts Bill was before the Legislative Council last week. The Attorney-General added that one of the great benefits which would be derived under the operation of the bill was that it would provide the machinery for deciding in an effective way whether or not an injurious combine existed.

"Take out the schedule," urged the Hon. G. Jones.

Dr. Findlay said the measure was admittedly of a tentative nature, but, as time passed, and proof was found that a monopoly existed in shipping or any other business, it would be easy to add to the schedule. The Government did not pretend that the bill would have a very large sphere of activity, but he believed it would be some deterrent to the growth of the evil at which it was aimed.

The second reading of the bill was carried on the voices.

Allegations of Cruelty.

At the Supreme Court, Wellington, the Chief Justice referred to the allegations of cruelty made by Olaf Aamensen, a Norwegian sailor on the German barque Martha Hockaben in New Zealand waters. Olaf stated that he was hung up by the heels and ill-treated in various ways, and preferred gaol to going back. On a charge of escaping from custody while detained on a charge of desertion, he was imprisoned for five weeks until the ship left. Inquiry had been made through the German Consul and the police, and the evidence emphatically contradicted the assertions, and adds that Aamensen was under the influence of liquor. Sir Robert Stout

said he was glad to have these statements. His experience was that Germans were not cruel, and had there been any trouble he knew the German authorities would have remedied it.

Brass Band Association.

Mr. E. Short, King's trumpeter, who was judge at the Ballarat band contest, has consented to act as judge at the North Island Brass Band Association's contest next February. At a meeting of the association's committee to-night, Mr Short was elected by ballot from seven candidates to the position of judge. All contest selections and test selections arrived by the English mail last week, and will be ready for distribution at an early date. The recent suspension of the Wellington Garrison Band has been withdrawn, and the band is now eligible to compete at the contest.

Playing "Pool" for Stakes.

Mr. Cutten, S.M., delivered his reserved judgment on Monday in the last case, being one of several against keepers of billiard saloons, alleging in effect that their rooms are conducted as common gaming houses. The fact upon which the prosecution depended was that defendant allowed "pool" to be played for small stakes daily, it being contended that the playing of any game for any stake was gaming, and that playing such a game habitually constituted the saloon a common gaming house. Mr. Cutten, S.M., said he thought the weight of authority favoured this contention. Having a license to keep a billiard saloon did not, in the magistrate's opinion, help defendant. There was room to infer that the legislature had in view wagering upon games of chance only, and not on playing games of skill for a stake, even when the stakes were contributed by the parties themselves; but such play was gaming within the ordinary meaning of the words of the Act, and evidence that the place was habitually used for such play was evidence of gaming. Seeing the defendant was convicted of keeping a common gaming house, he would be fined £6 and costs. Notice of appeal was given. The other cases were held over, pending the result of the appeal.

A Serious Fire.

It was reported from Christchurch last week that a serious fire started in lupins near the terminus of the North New Brighton tramline. Fanned by a north-west gale, the flames swept through the plantations towards the borough of New Brighton, destroying two cottages on the way. At one time there was an advancing wall of fire between three and four chains wide, and its wild, swift onward rush reminded one forcibly of the sweep of the prairie fires of America, but by 4 p.m. it was got under control, and was eventually extinguished without having caused any very considerable damage. Several residences were destroyed, but they were mostly small houses.

Trades and Labour.

The Otago Trades Council, as executive for the Trades Councils of the Dominion, is circulating all unions with a view to making a presentation to Mr. E. Tregear on his retirement from the position of Secretary of the Labour Department in January. The same body has circulated trades unions, advocating Mr. McCullough's re-election as workers' representative on the Arbitration Court.



AUCKLAND METROPOLITAN SPRING SHOW, 1910.

ALEXANDRA PARK.

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25 AND 26.

ENTRIES CLOSE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4.

Office: HALL OF COMMERCE, HIGH-STREET.