

# News of the Dominion.

## OUR WELLINGTON LETTER.

WELLINGTON, October 18.

### A Noble Gift.

THE most interesting announcement made in Parliament this week was the Ministerial statement concerning the splendid gift of Maori antiquities made to the State by Mr Geo. Buller, son of the late Sir Walter Buller. Mr Buller, with public-spirited and patriotic generosity, has decided to hand over to the Government, for exhibition in its National Museum, the great collection of Maori carvings, weapons, greenstones, native garments of the olden days, and specimens of native arts and crafts generally. This collection is the accumulation of a lifetime; in fact, it was begun by Sir Walter's father, the Rev. James Buller, who was one of the early Wesleyan missionaries to the Maoris. Mr Buller only makes one request, in handing over the gift: he wishes to see it properly installed in a suitable building, and that it should be known as "The Buller Collection," in memory of his father. This the Government has promised to do. "I believe," says Mr Buller, concluding his letter to the Prime Minister, "that in giving the collection to New Zealand I am carrying out the wishes of my late father, and I also have a patriotic desire to benefit the country of my birth. I think that it will be the means of attracting other collections, which may eventually form a museum of the arts and industries of the Maori race, which will be renowned for all time to come, not only in this but in other lands."

The gift is certainly the most valuable historic present made to the people since Sir George Grey gave his great library and his collection of Maori relics to the citizens of Auckland many years ago. The exact number of articles in the Buller collection is not known, but it comprises every description of Maori weapon and implement and garment; in fact, it will be a complete epitome of the picturesque native life of old New Zealand. The most valuable items are a beautiful carved store house or pataka, which has for many years past stood near the Buller homestead, on the shores of the pretty little lake Waiwiri, better known as Papatitonga, in the Horowhenua district, and a large carved war canoe, kept on the same lake. The big canoe was built and carved on the Wanganui River many years ago, and formerly belonged to Major Kemp (Kema to Rangihimui), the celebrated Maori soldier who fought on the Government side in the troubled "sixties." There is a large and representative collection of greenstones, including both personal ornaments and weapons; there are a large number of tools of the same age, including the largest stone adze at present known; there are weapons of all kinds in wood and bone and stone; and there are amongst the Maori-made garments two very fine dogskin cloaks, acquired as far back as the year 1838. In addition, the collection will include the specimens which Sir Walter Buller lent to the Imperial Institute in London some years ago. Truly a notable gift.

Mr Buller's presentation will have the welcome effect of hastening the construction of the long-promised new Dominion Museum to replace the present antiquated and inflammable building. The unprotected state of the treasures already stored in the museum must give the director, Mr Hamilton, many anxious nights.

But now the Government is going to push on with the erection of the new fireproof structure, which will, in all probability stand on the site of the existing building. The new building is needed badly and urgently, and it is good to hear, therefore, that plans are now being drawn by the Government architect for a museum which will worthily house a series of collections, the value of which is not to be measured in money.

### The Tail-end of the Season.

Parliament is beginning to huddle along with little work now that the summer is coming, and members are turning their eager eyes to their constituencies, and as there is a Parliamentary programme of considerable length still before them, they are exhibiting an anxiety to

push the work through without delay. The Premier yesterday gave the House a list of the Bills he wished to put through during the next week or two. The principal measures mentioned were the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill, the Widows' Pensions Bill, and the Tramways Amendment Bill. The second reading of the Farmers' Bank Bill is to be taken this session; the Premier proposes to leave the final stages to the next Parliament. The Public Works Statement comes down on Monday night, and members are anxiously waiting to see what the Statement has in store for their districts in the way of roads and bridges and other little gifts.

In answer to a question by Mr Ross yesterday, the Prime Minister said the Government intended to pursue an active settlement policy in respect of native lands, as well as other lands. They would go to the fullest extent of the power vested in them.

### The Wreck of the Elingamite.

Last evening the Elingamite Wreck Inquiry Bill, which permits a rehearing of the inquiry into the sensational wreck of that Huddart-Parker steamer at the Three Kings, passed its second reading, and it will be put through its final stages next week. Various members expressed their pleasure at this Bill, which aims at giving simple justice to Captain Attwood, who was commander of the Elingamite at the time of the wreck. Sir Joseph Ward, in moving the second reading, reminded the House that it had been ascertained recently that the island of the Three Kings, on which the Elingamite struck, had been wrongly charted, so that it was quite possible that a grave injustice had been done to the captain by the Court of Inquiry in holding him responsible for the disaster. The Minister of Marine, Mr Millar, announced that the Government would pay the cost of the rehearing to enable the case to be thoroughly gone into, and everything possible would be done to secure a thorough investigation. Which is good news for our mercantile marine officers, and for Captain Attwood in particular.

### A Hunt for Sunken Treasure.

What a fascination lost or buried treasure has for the human kind! One would have thought that the three or four or five unsuccessful attempts made to salvage the treasure of the celebrated oil ship General Grant, wrecked on the Auckland Islands in 1868, would have satisfied people that the gold which this vessel carried was lost beyond possible hope of recovery. Yet news comes of still another hunt for the £100,000 worth of gold from the Victorian goldfields—the ship was bound from Melbourne to London—that was known to be on board the General Grant when she struck the fatal west coast of the Auckland Islands. A company called the Sorenson Salvage Co. has been formed in New York with a capital of \$30,000, for the purpose of recovering the General Grant's golden cargo. The company's managing director, Mr. May, thinks there was much more than £100,000 in the ship. Besides the specie on the ship's manifest, there was also an entry of 15 cases of sundries, which they firmly believe also contained gold. Then there were also the private holdings of the miners themselves, and the members of the syndicate do not consider \$300,000 to \$400,000 wide of the possible mark.

Mr May, who is expected at the Bluff in a few days, holds most of the shares of the company himself, and has sole control. He has brought an expert diver with him, and is going to hire a small steamer, such as the ex-French gunboat s.s. Loyalty, now trawling at the Bluff. It will be a tough job, that salvaging of long-sunken ship's treasure. The place is such an exposed and stormy one that the chances are all against the hunters. The ship, with all it contained, has been driven by the seas no one knows whither, probably battered into fragments long ago. But hope springs eternal in the human breast.

He would far prefer to see an eminent New Zealander painting his pictures in his own country and sending them to European academies than that he should go to Europe and send an occasional picture to New Zealand.—Lord Islington.

## The Territorial Army.

The Commandant of the New Zealand Forces, Major-General A. J. Godley, C.B., arrived in Auckland on Friday from Wellington to confer with Colonel C. H. Wolfe and the staff on matters connected with the inauguration of the new scheme in the district. He remains in Auckland till next Wednesday, seeing as many of the senior officers as possible, and he will inspect the new garrisons that have been mounted at the North Head. The question of the fort at Burton's Point, as suggested by Lord Kitchener, is in abeyance just now, but it is understood that the new battery at North Head makes it unnecessary at the present time. There are several matters connected with the new training scheme upon which there does not appear to be the clearest understanding among the public. When these were referred to the Commandant on Friday he explained very lucidly, and his remarks will be read with interest, not only by those immediately affected by the new order of things, but by the general public as well.

"I do not think the matter is rightly understood in some quarters," said General Godley when the question of the 33 per cent reduction was mentioned. "There is no idea of in any way modifying the universal nature of the training. In the senior cadet stages, between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, it will be absolutely universal; only those—probably about five per cent—to whom the training might do physical harm, not being taken. But when we come to the Territorial army, the conditions are somewhat different. The Territorial army is for the defence of the country, and, as was stated by Lord Kitchener, and also by Sir Joseph Ward last year in Parliament, only those who are thoroughly and absolutely fit can be taken—men who can carry their pack of 60 to 80 lb, and march twenty miles a day, and the average of elimination in this country will probably work out, as was stated in Parliament last year, at about 33 per cent. It may be more in some cases, and less in others. It is not a question of numbers, as in the Auckland district so far from having too many men we shall in many parts have too few, but the Territorial army cannot be looked upon as a school of physical training, and only those absolutely fit, as I have said, can therefore be taken. It is in the senior cadet stages that this physical training will be given absolutely universally. At present we have quite enough to do to get the Territorial force started with the thoroughly fit, but as soon as it has a fair start the question of training the balance, either in the general training section, or perhaps by raising second battalions, etc. Our bands are now full without considering this at once, and it will have to wait for consideration until next year. The position, put shortly, is that from 14 to 18 you have a school of physical training, but from 18 the army is for the defence of the country, and in it you can therefore only have the physically fit, and must eliminate those who are not."

"Is 33 per cent a high average?"  
"No, it is really a low percentage due to the good physique of the youth of the Dominion. In Continental armies it is much higher, and at home it works out at about 60 per cent."

"There was some discussion in the House about non-prosecution in cases where there is failure to register under the Act. Are we to understand that there will be absolutely no prosecutions?"

"The situation in regard to registration is that the policy of the Government is not to prosecute. They do not wish to prosecute if it can be possibly avoided, and they hope that the scheme will go on without any necessity to prosecute, but the law must of course be upheld, and if necessary legal proceedings will have to be taken. The Government wish to give everybody a chance of fulfilling his duties as a citizen without submitting him to the judgment of court proceedings. It must be remembered that quite apart from the question of prosecution anybody who does not register thereby forfeits his rights as a citizen, and in the future will not be entitled to vote. I do not think that it is generally realised that a man will automatically lose his rights as a citizen if he neglects to fulfil his obligation for military services, and speaking personally I should think that this in itself would be a sufficient deprivation without any fear of a prosecution."

When asked whether there was any

thing in the rumour that it was not proposed to continue the training up to the age of twenty-five, General Godley said: "The law says that a man must be trained up to the age of twenty-five, and there is no intention of altering the law, but subject to the up-keep of establishment the regulations contemplate that after four years' service—which is the minimum time in which the military authorities consider a man can be made efficient—a man may, if he has made himself efficient during that time, be then allowed to go to the reserve. The effect of this would be that a man would be then able to go to the reserve at the age of twenty-two instead of twenty-five, thereby shortening the training by three years. The age must be retained legally at twenty-five in case it should be necessary to keep men up to that age, as for instance in case the population suddenly decreased or there occurred an outbreak of an epidemic. The population is fortunately increasing, and there is, I hope, no fear of an epidemic, so the effect will practically be that those who wish to go to the reserve will be able to do so after four years' efficient service."

### Trisoo Steamer Service.

The Oceanic S.S. Company, which is dominated by the Spreckels interest, has, it is definitely announced, decided to reconstruct the Ventura and Sonoma as oil burners, at a cost approximating £150,000, with a view to resuming running between San Francisco, New Zealand, and Australia. These two boats, which originally cost £200,000 each, have been lying idle in the Bay of San Francisco since 1906, waiting for a Government subsidy to enable them to resume the service. Apparently it has now been decided to start running without waiting any longer for the subsidy, which seems further away than it was in 1906. A contract has been signed for the work of putting the vessels in order for the service, and it is estimated that work will be provided for 300 men for half a year. When these vessels burned coal, the maximum speed was 16½ knots per hour. The sister ship Sierra was converted into an oil burner some time ago, and has been running between Fisco and Honolulu, and it has been found that her speed increased to 17 knots. It is estimated that the substitution of oil for coal as fuel will reduce the cost of running 40 per cent, and it is expected that the run across will be accomplished in nineteen days, instead of 21 as formerly when coal fuel was used. Tanks are to be built that will give these vessels a steaming radius of 10,500 miles.

The resumption of a service between Auckland and San Francisco should be of great benefit to this city, as the communication since the Spreckels line ceased running has been so irregular that a good deal of trade was undoubtedly lost during the intervening five years. In that time Auckland has progressed so rapidly that it should pay much better now to run the steamers than it did then.

The Ventura and Sonoma are twin-screw ships of over 6,000 tons register, each having accommodation for 175 first-class and 150 second cabin and steerage passengers. Electric lighting, wireless apparatus, and other appliances are to be installed for the safety and comfort of the passengers.

### Wine-growing Industry.

A petition was presented last Tuesday by Mr. Vernon Reed, on behalf of the committee of the New Zealand Viticultural Association, asking that the proposed Wine Licensing Act be amended to exempt absolutely New Zealand wines from the provisions of the general licensing Act. The petitioners also urge that the Government continue to encourage and protect the wine industry of New Zealand, by passing necessary legislation, and suggest, among other things, that it be made an indictable offence to add alcohol, or other deleterious compounds in any shape, to wine offered for public consumption. It is further suggested that all persons engaged in the manufacture or sale of wine be enabled to obtain licenses, and that all premises where wine is manufactured should at all times be free of access to public inspectors and analysts. Other suggestions include the permission for holders of wine licenses to retail wine, and the imposition of duties on imported grapes, pulp or crude grape juice. In conclusion, the petitioners urge that everything be done to restore courtesy and confidence among those engaged in an industry which promises to be the chief source of wealth from the good lands of the Dominion.