

News of the Week.

FRIDAY.

THE difference between the Westport Coal Company and their colliers has been settled upon a mutually satisfactory basis, and the men return to work on Tuesday. The agreement is that the men shall get relatively the same pay as that paid at Greymouth, such rate to be settled by arbitration.

At the annual meeting of the Lyttelton Harbour Board, held yesterday, the report showed the receipts for 1884 to be £64,995 including the balance from last year of £32,149. The expenditure was £55,244, of which £32,278 had been spent on harbour works. During the year 1195 vessels, of a total tonnage of 497,850 tons, have used the wharves. 687 of these were steamers, of a total tonnage of 399,615 tons.

The inquest on the bodies of those killed at the Cootamundra railway accident was concluded yesterday at Sydney. The verdict of the jury was to the effect that the Government were guilty of negligence in not supplying larger culverts at the scene of the accident, and that the catastrophe might have been prevented if the gang of fettiars had been supplied with more than one lamp.

The troops under Sir Herbert Stewart made a forced march on Sunday and Monday, and had nearly reached the Nile when they were stopped by the rebels near El Metemneh. The rebels were beaten after heavy fighting. The British loss was slight. The British column succeeded in reaching the Nile after a severe fight, and remained there till Tuesday evening. During the engagement Mr. Cameron, special correspondent of the London Standard, was killed. A later telegram from Lord Wolsey gives the following details of the action. When Sir Charles Wilson arrived within four miles of the Nile on the 18th inst., the enemy showed in strong force. Colonel Stewart therefore halted his column, although under heavy fire. It was here that Colonel Stewart was severely wounded. Colonel Sir C. Wilson assumed command, and leaving the wounded at Tarabah marched out the same afternoon. The enemy, led by several Emirs on horseback, charged the British gallantly but were repulsed each time, losing five of their Emirs and 250 killed, besides many wounded. The British loss is not stated. During the inspection of the enemy's position four steamers, under command of Misri Pasha, from Khartoum, reached Gubut Fort, south of El Metemneh, and landed guns and men.

SATURDAY.

A few days ago (says the *Thames Advertiser*) a paragraph appeared in an Auckland contemporary and was re-produced in this journal, to the effect that an important gold discovery had been made somewhere in the Waikato district, and that a small parcel of the metal had been brought to a Thames bank. From subsequent enquiries, it appeared that these particulars were scarcely correct, but from reliable information just supplied to us, there are evidently good grounds for believing that auriferous tracts of country have been discovered in the valley of the Waipa, the principal tributary of the Waikato river. Two half-castes, named George Hetita, and William Turner, have been carrying on prospecting operations in the ranges to the south-east of Kihikibi for about eighteen months, and their perseverance has been rewarded by some measure of success. Small samples of gold-bearing stone have been brought into Alexandria occasionally, but the prospectors are naturally reticent as to the exact locality in which they were obtained. The regular course in such cases is to apply to the Government for the reward for the discovery of a new goldfield, and at the same time seek protection for the prospecting area which the finders desire to occupy, leaving it to future events to establish the correctness of the first-named claim. We understand that this has lately been done, so that the matter will probably be heard of in due time. Barry, the old Thames prospector, who, it will be remembered, was intercepted by the natives in the Tubua ranges several months ago, when a small phial containing gold was found in his possession, is also said to be in one of the Waikato townships, but is not connected with the fortunate party.

The various auctioneers all quote lower prices than last year for sheep sold at the ram fair held at Napier on Thursday and Friday partly owing to the large numbers yarded, and partly, no doubt, to the continued depression in the wool market. The highest price given was 51 guineas, for one of the New Zealand and Australian Land Company's Lincolns. The average price for the Company's stud rams was £15 16s 8d, and the flock rams £5 9s 6d. The next highest prices were 41 and 36 guineas, given for two of Mr. Tanner's Lincolns. The average prices of Mr. Peed's rams were: For stud Lincolns, £9 15s; flock Lincolns, £5 14s 6d; Romney Marsh, £5 2s. The market for merinos was very depressed, no prices worth quoting being realised.

There was a crowded and enthusiastic meeting at Nelson last night, when the Premier delivered an address. Ignoring questions of party politics, he spoke at some length concerning Press criticisms, and after alluding to why the present Government existed, referred to some measures they had assisted to pass. The bulk of his speech was devoted to the three dangers besetting democracy—namely, war, the absorption of power by the few, and the amassing of wealth in few hands. In connection with the first danger he spoke of confederation, and the aim that in the South Pacific the Colonies should band together for general purposes. He did not object to European Powers colonising the islands, but did so the formation of depôts. Under the second danger he spoke of local government, referring to the danger of the central Government absorbing the whole powers. He said without local government there could be no true liberty; but the question was a large one, which had not been settled in England or Europe even, the Irish question being one of local government. The condition of England and America showed the result and danger of the absorption of wealth by a few. He spoke freely on the means he considered would avert these dangers, which might lead to

anarchy. He spoke on education in a similar strain to that at the Dunedin meeting. He referred to the prevention of the acquirement of large estates; advocated technical education and the teaching of thrift and temperance; co-operation and the establishment of small industries; the exercise of kindness, self-denial, self-respect, and strong individuality, together with strict justice to all. The speaker was very eloquent at times, and was repeatedly cheered. A vote of thanks, on the motion of Major Pitt was carried with enthusiasm. The party have just left for Westport.

The engineer of the Humphrey's Gully Gold-mining Company reports that the recent heavy floods have not damaged the main race, which carries over 100 Government heads of water. The race was running bank high, thus proving the stability of the works. The driving in the long tunnel is again being pushed on at both ends.

Mr. Balance (says the *Waikato Times*) seems to have thoroughly ingratiated himself with the upper Wanganui natives, who for many years have kept quite aloof from all intercourse with Europeans, and he has been equally successful with those living in other districts in the southern parts of the island. In a few days we shall have him in the Waikato, and his trip will doubtless extend some distance into the King Country, which is a somewhat safer place to walk about in now than it was during the *régime* of Sir Donald McLean. While here the Native Minister will no doubt clear up all the difficulties in the way of the prosecution of the railway. The territorial chiefs at this end are generally favourable to the scheme of the Government, but, like all the race, they are slow to move, and are perpetually haunted by suspicions of unfair treatment. It is no easy thing to overcome the prejudices and principles of a quarter of a century, and nearly that period of time has elapsed since the Natives laid down the *aukati* line at Maungatawhiri. Time may have shown them, as doubtless it has, the utter folly of that act, but their pride will not permit them to acknowledge it. The probability is that they had schooled themselves to believe that they had done the proper thing. If so, the Bryce policy roused them to a sense of the realities of their position. Mr. Bryce showed them their danger; perhaps they will follow Mr. Balance on to safer ground.

Sir J. Vogel was received on Thursday at Waiwera by a deputation of delegates from Whangarei re the North Railway. He said that the engineers were averse to the main line going by way of Whangarie and Kawakawa. He thought that the trunk line should be carried on from Helensville through the centre of the district of Hokianga. The Government intend to complete the trunk line to the North during the next five years. Next session the Government would introduce measures for aiding the construction of railways over other portions, which would form part of the trunk line.

Soundings on the Obden bridge site were taken yesterday, when a depth of water of 61ft. was found. When the piles were driven there was only 20ft.

Preliminary parleying is still proceeding between the British Government and the other European Powers, with the view of arriving at a satisfactory settlement of the Egyptian financial difficulties, and the last proposals of the English Cabinet, which include a loan to Egypt under a British guarantee, and the rejection of the principle of multiple control by the Powers over Egyptian finance as proposed by France, have now been accepted as a basis for further negotiations.

The Sub-committee of the Reichstag, appointed to consider the proposals to subsidise a certain line of mail steamers trading from German posts, have recommended the adoption of the projected line to Australia, but rejected one to Samoa.

Telegrams announce that a mutual understanding has been arrived at between Colonial Warren and President Kruger, of the Transvaal, regarding the settlement of Bechnansland and the Land Goshen. It has been decided to order off all the Goshenite freebooters who still remain on the land they occupied outside the convention boundary.

Prince Bismarck has accepted in an amended form the annexation rules proposed by England.

The latest reports from El Metemneh show that the enemy numbered 7000 men. Their loss estimated at 2000, and that of the British at 21 killed and 100 wounded. Sir Herbert Stewart has been raised to the rank of major-general. General Earle telegraphs that it is doubtful whether any fighting will occur before the column reaches Berber. He reports that the uncles of Suleiman, by whose orders Colonel Stewart and his party were murdered, have submitted to him. Telegrams report that the Arabs made an attack upon General Earle's column, but were repulsed by the cavalry. Subsequently the column attacked the rebels, and forced them to retire to Berti. El Metemneh was attacked by the British on the 21st. The British lost nine men, and then withdrew. Sir Charles Wilson has bombarded Shendey, opposite El Metemneh. Captain Viscout St. Vincent, who was wounded at the battle of Abukla Wells, has died of his wounds. Abundant forage has been obtained at Gubuk. Misri Pasha, who has arrived at Gubuk from Khartoum, has arranged to proceed with Lord Wolsey to rescue General Gordon. During the engagement near El Metemneh the enemy were never nearer the British troops than 30 yards. Seven thousand of the rebels took part in the engagement, and lost 1800 killed and wounded. The English loss was 20 killed and 60 wounded.

At the Fire Brigade banquet the other evening (says the *Otago Daily Times*) the toast of "The Ladies" fell into exceptionally good hands. Mr. G. E. Elliott in the course of his speech said a great many things to set the table in a roar, and amongst other matters he made a vigorous protest against the common use of the term "lady." Like a wise man, Mr. Elliott gave his reason. His antipathy to the word is, it appears, the result of an incident which occurred during his experience as a J.P. Mr. Elliott, with a companion, was inspecting the Dunedin Gaol, and approached that quarter on the female side where the short sentence prisoners are lodged. Here they found one inmate only—a female of unprepossessing appearance, dishevelled as to her dress, husky as to her speech—in short a victim to the 5s, or 24 hours' formula. "What!"