

## NEW ZEALAND: GENERAL.

OVER £1000 have now been collected in Wellington for the Governor's Veterans' Home scheme.

OWING to the increase in the shipments of stock to Australia the Union Company is putting on a special steamer from the South Island.

A NEW woollen mill was formally opened last week in Napier. Large orders for the company's products have already been received.

THE building of the memorial cairn to the late Sir John M'Kenzie was completed last week. Wednesday was the anniversary of his death.

THE Christchurch Master Bakers' Association has (says the *Press*) decided that on and after August 1, the price of bread per 2½ loaf shall be 2½d at bakers' shops, and 3d delivered.

MILLS for the manufacture of hats from the raw material were opened at Wellington on Wednesday. The Mayor set the machinery in motion and was presented with the first hat turned out.

The reading matter in the *Triad* for August is particularly interesting, whilst the illustrations are up to the high standard always maintained by this bright monthly.

IN consequence of Sydney having been declared free from plague vessels arriving from that port will not in future require to be fumigated. The medical examination of passengers will, however, be continued for some time.

THE new post office building at Gore is almost completed, some interior painting alone remaining to be done. It will be well on in December next, however, before the authorities will shift into it.

OUR Christchurch correspondent informs us that it was a sum of 120 guineas, not 100 as mentioned in his letter, that was subscribed in Darfield for the Christchurch Catholic Cathedral building fund.

IN the course of a discussion on the small birds nuisance at the Selwyn (Canterbury) County Council, one councillor mentioned that boys in the district were making £1 per week selling birds' eggs.

MR SEDDON, speaking to the National Committee of Organised Labor at Walworth, declared that England could easily bear the expenditure of £8,000,000, the cost of old-age pensions, under a scheme like that of New Zealand.

THERE were 20,302,032 sheep in the Colony on April 30 last, being an increase of 68,923 over the total on the same date in 1901. The increase in the North Island was 60,938, and in the South Island 8885.

A WELLINGTON firm has been instructed to buy up £10,000 worth of poultry for the Home market. The order is said to be the outcome of the satisfaction of a large firm of dealers in London with recent shipments from this Colony.

AT a meeting of the Wellington Chamber of Commerce, called to consider the State Fire Insurance Bill, it was resolved that in the opinion of this Chamber it is inexpedient that the Government of the Colony should embark in the hazardous business of insurance against fire.

THE Junior Reform Club of Liverpool entertained Mr Seddon at dinner. In the course of a speech he declared that England was now in the same commercial rut as in 1897. He urged her to keep her trade with naval supremacy, for if she lost one she would lose both. He recommended the Government to subsidise ships in addition to fixing a maximum for freights.

THE Ashburton Agricultural and Pastoral Association has finally decided on securing for the county the services of a duly-qualified veterinary surgeon, whose income shall be not less than £300 per annum. A guarantee for this amount has been freely signed by a large number of agriculturists and pastoralists.

SIR J. G. WARD has received a cable from Mr Seddon stating that in the medical examination at London University the lists in three of the four subjects were headed by New Zealand students—namely, Mr O'Brien (of Christchurch) and Mr Allen (of Auckland), who carried off gold medals and scholarships of the value of £140 and £60 respectively in open competition.

THE residents of St. Albans having carried rating on unimproved values some time ago, and finding now that it will press very heavily on certain classes of ratepayers, are looking around for some means whereby they can rid themselves of the trouble. If reports are to be relied on, they evidently took a leap in the dark, and are now repenting of their folly.

AN old Wellington boy, writing to his relatives in that city from Port Elizabeth on June 22, says:—"There has been a revolution in the Army Service Corps. The Imperial Government has imported cheap labor, 5s a day all found, consequently throwing the civilian clerks here out of employment. Men who have shouldered the rifle nearly all through the campaign have been thrown out of work to make room for men who have been sitting tight in England while we have been fighting. Loyalty rewarded!"

VISCOUNT KITCHENER's recommendations in his final despatch include the following New Zealanders:—Colonel R. Davies, Majors F. Abbott and E. Bartlett, Captains A. H. Stevenson, O. Somerville, Potter, and Johnstone, Lieutenant W. Morrison, Sergeant-majors Pickett and White, Regimental Sergeant-major G. Black, Quartermaster-sergeant Mitchell, Sergeant Smythe, Corporals Cato, Burns, and Beck, Lance-corporal Thorpe, Private Cassidy, and Sister Peiper.

THE annual meeting of the Bank of New Zealand was held at Wellington on Friday. The directors' report stated that the profits, after providing for expenses of management and for all bad and doubtful debts, were £289,501, from which had to be deducted interest on £2,000,000 guaranteed stock (£80,000), leaving £209,501. Of this sum the directors have allocated £37,000 as follows:—Further provision for Bank of New Zealand Estates Co. assets in liquidation, £22,000; in reduction of Colonial Bank property and premises account, £5000; in reduction of Bank of N.Z. property, premises, and furniture, £10,000; leaving a balance in profit and loss of £175,501. This, the directors propose, shall be disposed of as follows:—Statutory payment to Assets Realisation Board, £50,000; dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. for the year ended 31st March on the share capital (£427,319), £21,366, leaving a surplus to be paid over to the Assets Board of £101,135. The chairman, in moving the adoption of the report, stated that advances were higher by £330,000, and the profit earned on current banking business exceeded that of last year by £15,000.

A JUDGMENT of interest to anglers and acclimatisation societies was given in the Appeal Court, Wellington, on Monday, in the case of Campbell v. MacDonald. This was a case in which an appeal was made against the conviction of the appellant by Mr James, S.M., at Wairarapa, for fishing without a license, the facts being that appellant had, with the consent of a neighbor, fished for trout in a stream running through his neighbor's property without having taken out a license. The Fisheries Conservation Act, 1884, expressly provides that nothing contained in that Act shall apply to any person taking fish in water of which he is owner, nor to any person authorised by such owner. The Court were unanimously of opinion that although in the strict sense of the term no person is the owner of water of a stream running over his land, but only of the bed of the stream, he is the owner of the water in the ordinary meaning of the term, and that upon the construction of the Fisheries Acts the whole word must be given its ordinary meaning in those Acts. The Court therefore held that appellant had committed no offence, and the conviction must be quashed. The Court also held that the Acts give no authority to require the taking out of a license to fish or to impose a license fee, and that regulations for that purpose, which had been made under the Act and acted upon for many years, are ultra vires and void. The appeal was allowed, with £10 costs.

## Disastrous Colliery Explosion.

A disastrous explosion occurred last week at Mount Kembla Colliery, New South Wales. The report was heard several miles away, and very soon crowds of people—including wives and children of the miners—gathered at the pit's mouth anxiously awaiting, what must have been to many of them, sad news. One hundred and twenty of the men effected their escape, but it is believed that over ninety men have lost their lives. Although gas was never known to exist in the mine still it is conjectured that this was the cause of the explosion. Soon after the catastrophe occurring rescue parties were formed, as it was believed that the men in the back part of the mine had escaped the explosion, and were imprisoned by the debris, but it was impossible to enter the working in consequence of the smoke.

A strange thing about the catastrophe was that whilst the report was heard several miles away those in certain parts of the mine were not aware that anything out of the common had taken place.

Great bravery was shown by many of the rescue party, two of whom lost their lives in striving to aid the entombed men. Major McCabe, of the local artillery, and Mr. McMurray, deputy manager of the mine, sacrificed their lives in their attempt to reach the imprisoned men.

No greater instance of bravery was ever shown than that displayed by Major McCabe and Mr. McMurray. The manner of their death was most tragic. Major McCabe was at the head of a search party, when both he and Mr. McMurray were overcome by gas. They were helped by two brave miners named Cassidy and Crawford, who in turn also became affected by the deadly gas. Major McCabe first begged them to let him lie down, and save themselves. Cassidy and Crawford would not do so, but struggled on with Major McCabe and McMurray until they, too, almost collapsed. "Go, for your lives, and leave me," said Major McCabe. Too weak to assist them any more, and scarcely able to crawl, Cassidy and Crawford reluctantly left Major McCabe and McMurray, and managed by superhuman effort to reach the open air. When the body of Major McCabe was subsequently found by a search party he was clasping in his arms the body of poor McMurray. It looked, as if the latter had stooped down to assist, when he collapsed, Thus died two brave men.

The latest report is that nearly 90 bodies have been recovered and more are believed to be still in the mine.

Sensational stories are being told of some of the miners' narrow escapes and their awful wanderings in the darkness after the explosion before they reached daylight.

Three men, trusting to the intelligence of the pit horses used in the darkness, clung to the animal's harness and were carried out safely.

The worst feature of the death list is the number of cases in which two or more members of the same family were killed. Out of seven brothers named Egri, four were victims, while three brothers named Purcell and their uncle perished.

There is no definite theory as to the cause of the accident. The consensus of opinion among mining experts and the working miners is that the colliery was exceptionally free from gas.

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