



It is with regret that we have to report that a well-known citizen in the person of Mr A. J. **Burns** passed away with awful suddenness on Sunday morning. Mr **Burns** had an attack of influenza lately, but at the close of last week his health had greatly improved, and the members of his family had no warning whatever that the end was at hand. About 5 o'clock on Sunday morning, however — he was invariably an early riser — they were aroused by the noise of his falling in his room, and when they hurried thither they found him lying on the floor, his head showing a cut where it had been struck by some object as he fell. He was lifted on to his bed, and medical assistance was at once summoned, but before a doctor arrived Mr **Burns** had expired, the only word he uttered from the time he was discovered being a statement that he had never had such a feeling before.

Mr **Arthur John Burns**, J.P. was a son of the Rev Thomas **Burns**, D.D., whose memory is still revered in this province. He was born in the parish manse of Monkton, Ayrshire, Scotland, in 1830, and was a grandson of Gilbert **Burns**, brother to the national Scottish bard. He received most of his education at the Monkton Parish School and from his father. When the disruption of the Church of Scotland took place Dr **Burns** removed with his family to Ayr, where the subject of this sketch attended the Wallacetown Academy for a few years. He was then apprenticed in the merchant service, and went to sea. His first voyage proved eventful, as the ship was attacked by pirates in what is now known as the Arafura Sea. All hands had to fight for their lives, but relief came in the shape of a gale, and the ship and her crew were saved from the rapacity of the buccaneers. Mr Burns took part in the China war in 1845-46, being ordered out with a large number of British merchant seamen to assist the bluejackets in the attack on Canton.

When Dr **Burns** accepted the first colonial appointment of the Free Church of Scotland — viz , that of Otago. — he emigrated with his family in the Phillip Laing, in April, 1848. For some years Mr Arthur **Burns**, after giving up a seafaring life, took to farming and pastoral pursuits. He settled on the Taieri Plain, and was practically the founder of the town of Mosgiel.

Turning his attention to politics, he was elected to represent the Taieri in the Provincial Council as far back as 1856, and was for some years a non-official member of the Provincial Government. He afterwards assumed the portfolios of Minister of Lands and Works. In 1865 he was elected to represent Tokomariro, which comprised Taieri, Bruce, and Clutha, in the General Assembly. In 1866 he was returned for Caversham, and in 1869 resigned his seat to go to England to procure the plant for the establishment of a woollen factory at Mosgiel. Fully alive to the importance of pushing the young colony ahead and creating new industries, Mr **Burns** threw himself into the work with characteristic energy that made for success all along the line. In 1873 he sold the mill and plant to the Mosgiel Woollen Company, retaining a large interest therein himself. He occupied a seat on the board of directors at the time of his death.

In 1874 he made another visit to the old country, and stayed there for about a year. Coming back to Otago, he was re-elected to the House, this time as member for Roslyn, and was one of the strong opponents to the abolition of provincial government. He resigned again to assume the management of the Westport Coal Company, and entered into the work with the same spirit he had shown in the promotion of the woollen manufacturing industry. He superintended the erection of extensive works, and it is not going too far to suggest that much of the present-day prosperity of the company is due to his foresight and ability.

Some years ago he retired from the management of the mine, and took up his residence in Dunedin, and in 1890 successfully contested the Taieri seat against Mr Cairncross.

He was an ardent supporter of the Burns Club and other associations of a national character. Always a man of honour and integrity, he commanded a respect and esteem which extended considerably beyond the borders of the Province of Otago.

Mrs Burns predeceased her husband by three years.

Mr **Burns** leaves five sons, and five daughters. The eldest son is Surgeon-major Burns, who has achieved such distinction in connection with the New Zealanders who went to the South African war. One daughter is the widow of Dr McIntyre, of Timaru; another, the wife of Mr J.W. H. Haynes; while three are still unmarried.

Arthur Burns is buried in the Burns' family plot in Dunedin's Southern Cemetery.

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