

free miners to work any ground fit for placer-mining in derogation of the right of the existing concessionaire. The ninth resolution calls for application of the laws of trade, whatever that may mean, to the sale of liquor, to "ensure commercial freedom." They want a free British port on the Coast, "within reach of the headquarters of the Yukon river." These miners may have their grievances, but they have singular notions of what they are entitled to. The royalty should, if possible, be made to fall on profits; if there is no profit, it falls on capital, and operates as a serious discouragement. For that reason, we have always thought it too high.

OUR AUSTRALIAN LETTER.

So far the weather is favorable for a good season in Australia generally. Even the drought-stricken districts of New South Wales and Queensland have been blessed with considerable rains. Queensland is, perhaps, in the worst condition. The average rainfall for its great southwest district for five years has fallen from an average of twenty-one inches to fifteen, and for the past seventeen months the average has only been ten or eleven. In a country of so great heat and evaporation the loss of an inch or two on a low fall is serious, but when reduced by ten or eleven it means destruction. And destruction it has been. A writer estimates that the pastoral industry is poorer by £7,607,362 through loss of sheep and cattle. A large area is devoted to cattle-raising, and cattle do not become marketable or productive as quickly as sheep, so the cattle pastoralists are worse off than the sheep-raisers.

The future of wool is the problem here. The little gain of a month ago has once more been lost, and the outlook is not brighter than two months ago. It is a puzzle to everyone in the business. Last December prices in Sydney went up by quick bounds to fifteen pence for greasy merino. Now it is down to six and a half pence, the lowest point in twenty years or more in this market; and this with a drought in Australia and war in South Africa, which seriously lessened the output last season and promises to reduce it still further, and this time with prosperous times over the world generally, which ordinarily would increase the demand. The high price last year was the result of wild and unjustifiable speculation, and the foreign buyers who helped it on have suffered heavily. The low price now is, apparently, without any more reason than was the boom. The export of Australasian wool in 1899 was the smallest since 1890, being nearly four hundred thousand bales below that of 1895, and this year it won't be better, for the estimate is that the production of Queensland will be reduced by seventy thousand bales.

The production of wool per head of the population of Europe and North America in 1899 was the lowest since 1890. The estimates are: 1895, 2.91 lbs.; 1896, 2.80; 1897, 2.85; 1898, 2.75; 1899, 2.73. Yet an extraordinary quantity of wool is held over in London unsold and holders are afraid to offer it. Two conclusions are indicated: First, that the unwarranted high price of wool eight months ago led manufacturers to be very cautious in purchasing; secondly, that it must have led to a larger use of substitutes for wool; lastly, that wool must shortly advance. Possibly owing to the nervousness of once bitten speculators the opening sales fixed for the last of October, but it may be later, will show no improvement but statistics will be valueless if prices do not rise moderately before the season is over.

There was no case of plague in Sydney for over three weeks until Thursday last when one was discovered, and there has been none since. This instance shows how exceedingly difficult it is to eradicate the disease if it once gets an entrance. There have been a few cases in Queensland.

Australian federation is now complete, as West Australia, whose Government and Parliament hesitated to send the question to the people, eventually did so. The result has not been officially declared but the figures will be about forty-five thousand for to twenty thousand against. It was pretty certain that the people were in advance of the Government on the question, but so large a majority was not expected.

Please print it prominently that the postage to Australia is five cents per half ounce, and that the consequence of underpayment in Canada is to compel the recipient to pay double the deficit here. A Sydney man recently received a letter from a prominent Canadian manufacturer on which he had to pay sixteen cents. The letter was over a half ounce in weight, and had on it the customary two-cent stamp. It was not a large amount, but it was irritating all the more that it was an enquiry for information that would bring no return to the receiver.

The Australian papers published a story that Canada is officially endeavoring to induce the South African Boers to emigrate to the Canadian Northwest. Australia had the idea at the outbreak of the war, but neither country is likely to get many of the long-haired gentlemen, who desire a country in which black labor is plentiful and very cheap.

The Monetary Times says a Sydney firm is enquiring for maple sugar. I am afraid that the firm in question wants to get it at the expense of the Canadian shipper. Several enquiries have been made for the article at the Canadian office here, but when the enquirers were told the probable price, and that no maker was likely to send it out on consignment, interest in it was lost. A little comes here now for citizens of North America, and a little more could be sold if some dealer took hold of it but the quantity would be small, owing to the price and to the fact that Australians have not learned to yearn after the sugar, and don't eat pancakes.

There are genuine enquiries for Canadian connection by manufacturers' agents of a good class. On the steamer that carries this letter is Mr. Charles Dobson, who is seeking especially building materials. He has already sent over orders and carries more with him. He has a long experience in the trade and connections with the leading architects. He goes direct to Toronto, and tries Canada first, and if he cannot arrange there he goes to the United States, and then to England and Europe. This fact illustrates the use of the Canadian office here. Five years ago the Australian went to Canada out of curiosity; there were few of them, and they commonly limited their observation point to the west side of Niagara River.

Next month Mr. A. J. Knowles, who has been the successful manager of the Australian branch of the Goold Bicycle Co., limited, goes home. In the years he has been here undoubtedly more Goold bicycles have been sold in Australasia than those of any other maker, and he could have sold more if he could have had them when they were wanted. He may withdraw from the Canada Cycle and Motor Co., and endeavor to form a company to handle a general line of Canadian goods. Such a company is needed; and well handled should prove a profitable venture. He takes over an automobile that has an invention of his on the oil engine, which so far as tested shows a valuable improvement.

F. W.

Sydney, New South Wales, August 14th, 1900.

THE DISASTROUS FIRE AT PARIS, ONT.

Apprehensions had been felt in various parts of the Western peninsula of Ontario, as to the effects on land or on the Great Lakes, of the expiring efforts of the frightful and deadly hurricane, which began in the Gulf of Mexico and which "Old Probabilities" told us, was coming north and west. Small disasters, here and there, to buildings and more marked wrecking of fruit trees marked the course of the wind in Ontario on Wednesday, but a fire which began in Paris in Meldrum's flour mill in the early morning was fanned by the fierce wind to a degree that devastated with flame three acres in the business part of that pretty town, and wiped out thirty-four places of business. The fire-swept part of the town is bounded by the Grand River on one side, and the street next beyond Grand River street on the other. The buildings, on River street, from the Smith's Creek bridge to beyond William street, was practically swept out of existence. The loss of the electric power house left the town in darkness save for the light of the flames. Well did the town brigade work, and there was no lack of water, but the fire was beyond control of the firemen and the citizens, so word was sent to Brantford for assistance. Hose and men soon arrived from that city and with the fire walls of buildings helped to confine the flames. But