

began the borrowing and extravagance, and encouraged it in the interest of his own pocket, little caring what would happen in the future and nothing seems to teach him prudence. The Government of Victoria proposes to build a Central Railway Station, and would need a good many bricks. Here was a chance for the idiotic money man and he promptly seized it. He formed a combine of the brick makers, shut up some of the yards, threw some men out of work, stiffened the price of bricks and thought he had the Government. The stiff old Premier, though an anti-Socialist, said nothing but bought a suitable clay field and says the State will make its own bricks. The Socialists are tickled mightily at this sudden conversion of their old enemy. It will strengthen their hands more than five years of agitation. But even the stupid capitalist may attain to common sense and things will begin to improve.

The Government of New South Wales is wrestling with a scheme for settling people on the land which includes a special bureau in London to advertise this as a home for emigrants. How it is going to compete with the free grants of fertile lands in Canada when the best it can offer is good land at three pounds per acre, with sundry fancy additions to the title, and to be ballotted for at that, does not yet appear. It has not stayed the enquiries of Australians who want to go to Canada. Last year, according to the official returns, nearly six hundred went, and six thousand would have gone if they had sufficient money to take themselves and families there. The majority of those going are bright, promising-looking young fellows, many of them with a knowledge of farming.

The only Canadians coming here latterly are those who are taking this route from South Africa. If, as is the case sometimes, they have no money on arrival here they are in for a bad time. The papers report the arrest of one for horse stealing. The judge asked the Canadian, "What did you come here for?" "To find work," was the answer. The judge said: "You ought to have known that Australia is a good place to come to spend money, but no place to look for work."

The next steamer from Vancouver can't get any cargo, yet Australia wants No. 1 hard wheat for seed, but none is to be had. Oats, first-class, are worth here nearly seventy-five cents per bushel, potatoes fifty dollars per ton, hops thirty cents per lb., but none from Canada. Is Canada an exporter of agricultural products anyway?

The ends of the earth are not so far apart. By the last Canadian steamer there arrived a man whose family reside in British Columbia, but he did not often see them. Recently he is from the frozen Klondike, where he searched for gold. Now he has gone to tropical British New Guinea, where the aborigines are still cannibals and the fever is more deadly than the spear of the native, prospecting for rubber. He knows what he is about, for he has been there before, and was nearly done for by fever. If life will hold out for six years he expects to have a plantation more valuable than any Klondike mine, and I think he may.

The Federation of Australia was only a half done job. The Premiers of the Commonwealth and several States have concluded their annual foregathering, at Hobart, to see if something can't be done to advance the completion. Over sixty items were down for consideration, and some progress was made with a few. Even the taking over of the debts was advanced a step, though the State Premiers were by no means unanimous upon it. The great hindrance lies in the omnivorous State maw for loans, and the Commonwealth Treasurer, Sir George Turner, wants to close it.

Sydney, New South Wales, 13th Feb., 1905.

F. W.

OUR HALIFAX LETTER.

The Lunenburg fleet is now preparing to start for the spring trip to the Banks of Newfoundland—a little earlier than usual—and is outfitting in Halifax. This has been a favorable feature for the city at this time of blockaded railroads, because the Lunenburg supplies can all be shipped by water, and they are a very considerable item, applying as they do to over one hundred and fifty ships. Lunenburg is a town of some 5,000 people in the county of same name, forty miles from Halifax in a direct line, but twice that

nearly if one had to follow the deeply-indented coast line.

An item of interest to travelling men will be the fact that the Halifax Hotel will change hands on April 1st. A syndicate of Halifax and Montreal men are about to take over the hotel on lease for a term of years with the option of purchase. E. L. McDonald, who has become a great favorite in the Sydney Hotel, will be manager. The new lessees propose to spend a large sum of money in making the hotel thoroughly up to date, and Mr. McDonald is now visiting hotels in the large cities of Canada and the United States on an observation tour. The Messrs. Hesslein, the owners of the Halifax, have been conducting the business for many years, it having been established more than a half a century ago by their father.

A. & W. Mackinlay, wholesale stationers, a business which is as solid and almost as old as the city itself, has been changed in style to A. & W. Mackinlay, Limited, in order to permit of giving some of the employees of the firm an interest in the business. It is now in the hands of the third generation.

Millinery houses here are preparing for the spring openings, which are to take place on March 29th and 30th, two weeks earlier than usual.

Halifax people have been enjoying cheap and luscious fruit during the past few weeks. A Halifax commission dealer made the experiment of bringing two schooners full of fruit, stowed in bulk on numerous temporary decks built in the holds. The schooners made the trip from the Bahamas in ten and seventeen days, respectively, and a great part of the fruit was landed here in good condition. The oranges were sold at the wharf at \$1.25 per hundred. This is of interest, as it is the first time that a Canadian port has received shipments of oranges in this way. It is the intention of the present experimenter to bring in fruit by chartered steamers next fall in the same manner.

There has been a heavy blockade of export freight here, particularly goods bound to the West Indies, and there is much piled up all along the I.C.R.

Operations at the Londonderry Iron Works are a little dull at present. The blast furnace has been "blown out" in order to reline it, and it may be the first of May before smelting is resumed. The pipe foundry has also been shut down, but work there and at the coal-washer and coke ovens will probably be resumed shortly.

Captain J. A. Farquhar, of Halifax, has floated a company for the erection of a steel dockyard at North Sydney, capitalized at \$250,000. The Dominion Government gives a subsidy of 2½ per cent. of the capital invested.

E. S. Blackie, chemist, proposes to establish at Halifax a plant for the manufacture of wood alcohol, acetate of lime, creosote, and other hardwood by-products. He is negotiating with the Standard Chemical Company, of Toronto, with a view to inducing them to take an interest in the matter.

Failures in this Province during February show an increase over those of last year. Liabilities were \$72,100 as compared with \$67,000 in the previous year. Assets amounted to \$32,500 as compared with \$22,300 in last February's failures. The figures in Prince Edward Island are less favorable, being four failures, with liabilities of \$67,000, compared with one last year, with liabilities of only \$4,000. These figures would probably be worse were it not for the fact that the banks as well as the wholesale people have been particularly accommodating owing to the extraordinary conditions prevailing during most of that month.

Halifax, 20th March, 1905.

NOVA SCOTIA STEEL COMPANY.

The annual statement of the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company, which was issued a few days ago, shows that profits for the year 1904 were \$501,337, while the balance brought forward from last year was \$685,642, making a total at the credit of profit and loss on December 31st last of \$1,186,979. The balance carried forward at credit of the profit and loss account on the 1st of January, 1905, is \$695,749, as compared with the sum of \$685,642 on the 1st of January, 1904. The volume of general business transacted