

ant developments in the mining and treatment of minerals.

A very interesting section of the report is that devoted to the uses of nickel. Its value either pure or in alloy with copper, zinc, and other metals depends largely on its white color, and Prof. Coleman makes a strong plea for the use of the pure metal for coinage purposes. It does not tarnish, nor does it change color, but keeps a bright attractive surface, while owing to its hardness the coin imprint wears much better, and it is difficult to counterfeit. Why, he asks, should not Canada, the producer of half the nickel of the world, replace her ugly cents by clean, untarnishable, nickel coins, almost as handsome as silver, and much more durable? "Canada is presently to have a mint, and it should begin its work by coining one-cent and five-cent pieces of pure nickel; making use of a distinctly Canadian metal."

#### OUR AUSTRALIAN LETTER.

Mr. Jas. Mills, the managing director of the Canadian-Australian Steamship Company left for England via Canada on the steamer "Maheno" two weeks ago. Before leaving New Zealand he was entertained at dinner, at which the Premier of New Zealand spoke. In his speech he urged Mr. Mills to use every effort to get the Canadian-Australian steamers to touch at a New Zealand port, and asked him to tell the Canadian Government that "it would be to the interests of Canada if these vessels called here."

The first steamer of the Canadian-New Zealand direct service was in Newcastle for about ten days, and then proceeded to Wellington, N. Z., to load for Vancouver. It was advertised that she was to touch at Sydney and Melbourne, but the management learned, what was quite apparent to everybody long before, that there was no cargo offering in these ports, and she, therefore, did not enter them. It is absurd to think that people would ship goods for Vancouver that would require about six weeks to reach there when they could get them to that port in half the time at no higher figure. I have seen a letter from New Zealand, sharply criticising the management of the new line. Nobody over there seems to be in love with it.

A very curious agricultural case is under investigation in Victoria. One of the best known families in that State is the Chirnsides. One of them is the president of the Royal Agricultural Society, and he was very much surprised, while presiding at a meeting of the committee, to have a statement presented to it in which a man asserted that at the instigation of Chirnsides' manager he bought a gallon of cream and a syringe, the purpose being to enrich the milk of Chirnsides' cows who are under test for the production of butter fat at the Exhibition, and that he had been paid directly by a cheque from Chirnsides himself. It was admitted the cream had been purchased and paid for, but it was denied that the syringe had been bought with the intention of forcing the cream into the new milk. The object of the cream was, it is alleged, to mix it with bran and feed to the cows sometime before milking, which it was stated was not an unusual proceeding. Even if this last be the truth, it indicates that our rural friends have "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain" that are not commonly known, for it certainly cannot be alleged that feeding cream to a cow would be fair dieting in a test. Possibly there are imitators of this practice in Canada.

Though the Independent Order of Foresters is the only Canadian institution doing life assurance in this country, yet it has become known to some, at least, that an investigation into life assurance matters in Canada is in progress. An insurance man here sometime ago said that the weakness of the United States assurance companies was in their being too intimately associated with politicians and stock-brokers, and that Canada was following in the wake of the United States. His criticism was fairly accurate as far as the United States; it is to be hoped, however, it will

fail with respect to Canada. The investigation will be watched with some interest here to know whether the procedure in Canada will be as thorough as in New York and whether British institutions have stood the temptation better than those institutions recently investigated in New York.

The labor leagues of New Zealand have had under consideration their compulsory arbitration scheme. The members criticized the judges of the court, including their representative, very severely and declared that their recent decisions had been contrary to evidence. It, however, refused to ask for the rescinding of the law, but urged the labor unions to settle difficulties by arbitration. The discussion showed a widespread disappointment and dissatisfaction with a scheme that it was once hoped would settle all industrial troubles.

The two combinations which have controlled the shipping trade of New Zealand with Europe have quarrelled and are cutting rates. It is probable, that this cutting will extend to Canada and it may be even to Australia, though the indications are now that it will not. If these combines lose money, New Zealand will not regret it, as they have been unpopular, owing to their charging higher for goods from Britain than from foreign countries. Canadian shippers under present conditions will need to look keenly after freight rates.

Australia has the immigration fever badly. On every hand advice is being given to follow Canadian methods. This city is particularly active in this direction and has an Immigration League, with a worthy doctor—a member of Parliament—at its head. Recently a young fellow born in England but living most of his life in Toronto, went to visit friends in England, and hearing glowing accounts of Australia made up his mind to come here instead of going back to Canada. He had some money and was not in a hurry to get employment but thought he would look around. His pocket was picked of most of his money and then he hustled to find the employment which he was assured was so abundant but failed to find it. He was advised to try the Immigration League. The secretary welcomed him warmly and courteously passed him on to the president. The president's welcome was not quite so warm, but he as courteously passed him on to the Intelligence Department of the Government and the Intelligence Department of the Government received him, but less warmly still, and being the court of last resort it showed him into the street as the only thing it could do, and in the street he is yet, looking for employment or how to get back to Canada. And this is how immigration here is done after the manner of Canada! The moral is that Canadians had better stay at home for the present. There are Australians for every job that is open.

The Commerce Bill, of which you were advised some time ago, is likely soon to be put into operation. Lest your readers may have forgotten, they should be reminded that its purpose is to prohibit the importation of goods with an improper trade description, and that improper trade description includes any false statement of the nature, number, quality, purity, weight or grade of the goods; also as to its place of production, its manner of packing or selecting and the material or ingredients of which it is composed. This applies to articles of food or drink, medicines or medicinal preparations, apparel, including boots and shoes, and jewellery.

The population of this State (New South Wales) is estimated to be beyond the million and a half mark and what is better, the rural population is growing faster than the city; but still more than one third of the inhabitants of the State are residents of the city of Sydney. This applies also to Victoria and South Australia, but the rural population there, too, is growing more rapidly than the city. The increase in the city population in the past was due to the extravagant borrowing of the Governments, moneys which directly or indirectly were expended in the city and stimulated a growth that was not healthy. The limitation of borrowing is in more than one respect a great blessing to Australia.

Parties, including a number of Canadians, have for years been sinking bores in the North Island of New Zealand in

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