

BOOMING AUSTRALIAN TRADE.

Record Wool Year: Increased Commerce With Japan:
Pest and Wealth of Rabbits.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

Sydney, June 5th, 1906.

The Australian Parliaments, Commonwealth and State, are nearly all in session. The Commonwealth Parliament is occupied mainly with an Anti-trust Bill. Its purpose is to prohibit the entry of goods made by a combination; but, according to its opponents, the purport is to prohibit the importation of goods that may in any way affect Australian products. It is being roughly handled; and is not likely to go through in its present shape.

The State Governments, with the exception of that of West Australia, have met under the happy condition of revenues, which largely exceed the estimates of a year ago. In New South Wales the excess is four and a half million dollars above the estimates, and the surplus of receipts over expenditure is nearly the same amount. Victoria is happy in a surplus of three and a half million dollars. South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania rejoice in smaller amounts. West Australia is equally prosperous; but its revenue is declining, owing to the steady reduction of the duty upon imports. To meet its special needs it was allowed to have a special tariff upon imports, gradually declining until now it is about the same rate as the other States.

In the speech from the Throne in the New South Wales Parliament, several excellent measures were proposed. One was to restrict gambling and betting; another was a measure to abolish the tramp nuisance. The Government also promised vigorous dealing with immigration. Much attention this session will be devoted to the Land Scandal. The ex-Minister of Lands, Crick, of whom you have heard something before, has again been arrested and put upon his trial for conspiracy in accepting bribes for the granting of public lands to applicants, who paid so liberally for the privileges. Willis, the chief agent in the Land Scandals, is being brought back from South Africa, to which he fled. It is probable that Parliament will expel Crick.

Enormous Rabbit Population.

The rabbit question, which has hitherto been almost wholly an industrial one, has now become a political one. It is estimated that the rabbits reduce the carrying power of the land in the western districts at least 20 per cent.; in some cases even to a greater extent. The pastoralists are, therefore, unceasing in their efforts to get rid of the pest. Dr. Danysz has been brought from Paris in expectation that he has a culture producing a disease which will destroy the rodent.

But rabbit skins are abnormally valuable; and the export of frozen rabbits not to be despised. The catching of rabbits has become a great industry, and whole families are out in pursuit of "bunny," earning from \$25 to \$60 per family per week. These people look with a good deal of concern at any scheme that may reduce their occupation, and their case is being championed by the Labor politicians, who have no love for the pastoralists. They have had sufficient influence to prohibit Dr. Danysz from making experiments until their scientists have determined whether his culture is new, is likely to produce the desired effect, or whether, if it kills the rabbits, it will not also affect other animal life and human beings. Danysz has been here for some time; and the customs seals upon his deadly germs have only just been allowed to be broken.

Canada is also taking a hand in rabbit destruction in Australia. A short time ago Mr. R. W. Prittie, of Toronto, was here in the interests of a vermin exterminator which he makes. He arranged with a leading firm to handle it. This firm is pretty confident that this poison, though nominally very dear, is the most effective, and in the end the cheapest. If this proves to be correct there will be an enormous demand for it. The rabbit pest of Australia can scarcely be understood in a colder country. Here the rabbit breeds at least eight times in a year, bringing forth large families.

It has been stated that the product of one pair of rabbits for eighteen months will amount to one million and a half. This, of course, is excessive, but the numbers can be judged by the fact that in New South Wales alone, half a million rabbits are packed every week for shipment, and from 130 to 140 tons of pelts are sold every week, which means the destruction of two and a half millions of animals. Yet the destruction for skins and for packing is but a bagatelle of the destruction throughout the State through various methods of trapping and poisoning, in which the rabbits are

thrown out to decay in huge heaps. Sydney is credited with handling sixty million skins during the first six months of this year.

Rapid Growth in Exports to Japan.

Mr. J. B. Suttor, the Commercial Agent of New South Wales to Japan for the past three years, has been brought back to visit the industries of the State. The trade of Australia and particularly that of New South Wales with Japan went up with a bound in consequence of the war. In 1903 the exports of the state to Japan were £73,107, nearly all of which was wool. In 1904 it went up to £350,770, and in 1905 to £377,451. The exports of Australia to Japan between 1903 to 1905, multiplied five-fold, which is enormously in excess, according to the figures of the exports of Canada to that country, both in the total and the relative increase. Nearly three-fifths of the increase in the exports of Australia to Japan was in wool; but there was a jump of about \$800,000 in foodstuffs and animals, in which one would have thought Canada could have shown a like increase. Mr. Suttor has done good work in connection with this increase, but there is no doubt that the traders of New South Wales have shown very much greater enterprise in exploiting this market than did the Canadian.

Mr. Suttor tells people that Australian trade is welcomed because it is under the British flag, and that its allegiance has had very much to do with the development of that trade. He also speaks highly of the prospects of the future, and hints have been given that Japan is about to place an order for a million and a quarter dollars' worth of rolling stock in this state. As this is dependent upon the prices being right, it is doubtful if it will come about.

It is proposed to increase Mr. Suttor's salary, probably \$6,000 a year. New South Wales appreciates good work, and is prepared to remunerate it. He is also to be given a free hand in his movements.

Australia is going to bid for the wheat and flour supply of that country. Last year the wheat yield of the Commonwealth was put down at 68,490,090 bushels. This gives very nearly forty million bushels of wheat for export—a quantity that will enable her to be a very strong competitor for the Eastern trade. One feature of this production is the improvement made by the use of fertilizers sown with the grain in South Australia. Seven bushels per acre was at one time deemed a high yield for that state; last year it went up to nearly twelve bushels. This year, if the season continues fine, the production will go over seventy million bushels of wheat for the Commonwealth.

Exports Mounting Rapidly.

The first case under the Commerce Act was the stoppage of a number of so-called gold rings. They were stamped 9 carat; but on analysis were found to contain only three. Public opinion claims that the Government was right in stopping such fraudulent importations.

The trade of the Commonwealth is booming. The exports for first five months of the year, with the exception of coal, which is reduced by £20,000, flour and hides about the same—have greatly increased; butter by nearly 50 per cent., copper by nearly 60 per cent., frozen meat by 70 per cent., sheep-skins by 50 per cent., and wool by 50 per cent. The importations also show increases; but not to the same ratio. The wool year closed on May 30th, the total export being 1,454,820 bales. Of this, 1,158,152 bales worth £15,711,835 were sold before leaving Australia. Should the balance shipped be sold at the same price, the export of Australian goods will be £9,738,500. Adding the wool used locally the total value of the wool clip of Australia for last year would be £20,000,000. The value at the local sales was £13,114 per bale as against £12,150 the year before. The total product is a record one, though the price per bale realized was below that of the year 1899-00, when £16,148 was obtained.

The Socialists of Melbourne, under the leadership of Tom Mann, a former London agitator, took up the role of visiting the leading churches of the city and interrupting the services by their criticisms of the preacher. One service was abruptly closed. The leading Labor organizations have refused to have anything to do with the scheme. Probably the police will stop the nuisance. In another part of Victoria an effort is being made to establish a Labor Church, with its basis, "Pure Socialism as Preached by Jesus Christ." It is alleged that the present churches do not supply this felt want.

F. W.

The amounts to be given for horses at the Canadian National Exhibition this year are as follows:—Thoroughbreds, \$681; roadsters, \$411; standard-breds, \$461; carriage and coach horses, \$396; hackneys, \$521; clydesdales, \$731; shires, \$611; heavy draught (Canadian bred), \$408; general purpose, \$192; ponies, \$485; roadsters (harness), \$480; standard-bred (harness), \$170; carriage horses, \$580; specials, \$1,620; hunters and jumpers, \$665; ponies in harness, \$210; boy riders, \$67; children's turn-out, \$40; trotting and pacing, \$2,700.

Besides the foregoing, 25 silver medals, 6 gold medals, 12 silver cups and 1 gold cup are given.

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