

paces and grand stand amusements, but those worthy and remarkable exhibits in all departments, which shall have an informing and educating effect upon those who attend. This is what constitutes the real value of such displays. Mr. Long ley evidently understands this well, judging from his address at the Halifax exhibition.

Some suggestions are made to the managers of the Central Fair at Ottawa, too, which it may be well for them to heed. The sphere of the fair is gradually extending, and year by year it increases in importance and patronage. Therefore, says the Journal, not only should the grand stand be enlarged, but extra entrances and exits should be put up. The dairy building should be enlarged and more commodious structures should be provided in several other departments. This year's fair was a good one, and in spite of the deluge of rain on its last day, which lessened the attendance by probably 10,000, the receipts showed a gratifying increase over 1897.

While the reduced railway fares had to do, doubtless, with the increased attendance this year at some of our great fairs, there is yet room to infer that the people feel better able than in previous years to spend some time and money on such occasions. As to the Toronto Industrial and the considerations which should govern it we expressed ourselves somewhat fully a year ago. It will not be out of place to remind the managers of all such affairs that the normal purpose of displays of the kind is improvement. Each annual display should be a stepping stone to something better the next year. Thus the industries of the country will be stimulated to produce year by year something more worthy of being shown to our own folk and to visitors.

—Word comes from Montreal that W. E. Gillespie, the Penetang merchant who was arrested in Montreal for conspiring to swindle his creditors, has been found guilty and sentenced to six months' imprisonment, a result that will probably have a deterrent effect upon men who are like-minded with him. And in Hamilton last week, A. L. Stares and W. B. Cook, charged with conspiracy to defraud creditors and with theft, were committed for trial by the magistrate. Judge Snider fixed bail at \$1,200, with two sureties of \$600 for each prisoner. Resolute action is necessary in dealing with such people if wholesale merchants are to have any security.

OUR AUSTRALIAN LETTER.

The weather continues favorable, although there are some dry spots in this colony. The rains have been sufficiently abundant to cause the optimist to predict a record crop of wheat for the next harvest. In no country is there a greater slip between a harvest prediction and realization than in Australia. Thus far the crop looks well and an increased acreage has been sown. New South Wales, until this year, has never grown enough grain for its own consumption, but the acreage and production has increased nearly three-fold since 1891, and next year the prophets assert there will be from three to six million bushels for export. Should the hopes of the sanguine be realized Australia will have 25,000,000 bushels of wheat beyond its own needs.

For the year to date the importation of merchandise into Sydney is £305,524 less than that of the same months of the previous year, but the exportations of merchandise are £87,114 in excess of the same period. This is an evidence of cautious trading.

The gold mines of the colony are yielding better than ever, the increase being 1,623 ounces over last year. The other gold producing colonies are doing still better, as Victoria, Queensland and West Australia show an increase for the seven months of 364,814 ounces. This is a yield for the four colonies for this

period of 1,689,229 ounces, and indicates a yield of over fifty million dollars for the year. It will take more than one Klondyke to bring Canada up to this mark. The above return does not include New Zealand, Tasmania and South Australia, which will add about six million dollars more to the sum. Australia can afford to purchase ten dollars' worth of goods per head of its population, and pay for it in gold and then retain enough for its own reasonable use.

The governments of the colonies, with one exception, are comforted with an improving condition of their finances. The figures for New South Wales I gave in a previous letter. Those for the other colonies published are: Queensland estimates for the current year revenue £3,882,360, expenditure £3,866,507, increased revenue over last year £114,208, surplus £15,853. Last year there was a reduction in the custom's tariff on many lines, which makes the statement all the more favorable. This colony is steadily improving in nearly all its leading industries. Even the pastoral is recovering from the tick plague that severely ravaged its herds of cattle.

Victoria expects to have income, £6,907,439; expenditure, £6,848,529; increase of revenue over that of last year, £20,775; surplus, £58,910. This surplus will be decreased by the payment of £25,000 loans, which fall due.

South Australia places its revenue at £2,649,899; expenditure, £2,619,220; increase of revenue, £83,288; surplus, £30,679. This is only a nominal surplus, as this colony is saddled with an expenditure of £50,000 per annum in the government of its northern territory. This incubus would be thrown on the general government should federation take place. South Australia is also paying off a small portion of its debt from its ordinary revenue. It has also suffered from three bad harvests, reducing its yield to four bushels of wheat per acre. Its average yield is scarcely seven bushels. Under the circumstances the condition of the colony must be considered to be very favorable.

New Zealand's premier prophesies that that colony will have a surplus of nearly five hundred thousand pounds sterling. The details are not to hand and some doubt is expressed as to how the hope is arrived at. New Zealand is a heavily taxed community, but is prospering nevertheless.

Western Australia does not show up as well. Its revenue last year was nearly two and one half times that of three years ago, but the colony ended the year with a deficit of £502,164. It hopes for an increased revenue this year and is cutting down expenses earnestly; and looks for a surplus at the end of the year.

The natural consequence of this state of things in nearly all the colonies is a disposition to go and borrow more money "to develop the country," as it is phrased. Queensland proposes to borrow a million and a half pounds, and purposes spending a portion of it assisting immigration. Her sugar plantations, it is claimed, cannot be worked by white labor and the colored man must be got. Hitherto he has been obtained from among the Kanakas of the South Sea Islands, but the crop is not enough to supply the demand. Japs have latterly come in, but these are independent, and are besides looked at a little askance if they come in too large numbers.

Victoria proposes to borrow money and expend it mainly on its railways—not in building new lines, but improving the terminal facilities and rolling stock of the existing ones. This colony swore off from borrowing after the crisis of 1893, for its collapse was not a little due to the ease with which money had been borrowed, and the extent to which it was borrowed. But a better outlook has brought back the old fever.

West Australia, since the discovery of its gold fields has wanted enormous loans for a small population. It increased its debt from half a million pounds in 1881 to five millions in 1896. Its taxes are over thirty-three dollars per head of the population. This is six times the rate in Canada and is double that of any other government in the world. New Zealand ranks next with just half the rate. It should be borne in mind that men form the great preponderance of the population in West Australia, and a mining population consumes tobacco and alcohol pretty freely. The country is by no means ruined, but it is well for the colony that its last application for a loan recently got but a cold reception in the London money market.

The recent general election in New South Wales has left the Government with a narrow and somewhat uncertain majority. It has had the remarkable effect of making every member