

OUR AUSTRALIAN LETTER.

The new customs regulation, referred to in my last letter on freight charges on merchandise, has worked out rather differently to what was expected of it. The regulation reads as follows:

"F.O.B. Value.—On and after August 1st provisions section 154, paragraph A, Customs Act, are to be strictly complied with in regard to assessment of value of goods for duty; the following charges are to be included in estimating free on board value, namely, cost of labor and materials (except outside packages) used in packing, and all cost of conveying goods from place of sale and placing them on board ship, except the following charges, which must be included: Stamp duty, including that on bills of lading; also buying commission and brokerage.

"The value for duty of goods forwarded, e.g., from Montreal, in Canada, overland to New York for shipment at the latter port is to be taken as f.o.b. at the Canadian frontier."

It is the application of the last paragraph by American importers which has surprised the local Customs officials, and given them a clearer idea of the geography of North America than they ever had before. A large quantity of American goods, such as typewriters, computing scales, cash registers, etc., are shipped to Australia by the Canadian Pacific Railway and the port of Vancouver. In many cases the goods are manufactured in the Eastern States, and if the value was reckoned at Vancouver the amount of duty would be a fair increase on the duty reckoned on the value at Dayton, O., Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, or other point of manufacture. But the American importer naturally makes his entry with cost of freight to the place on the Canadian border where his goods crossed the line, whether that place was in Quebec, Ontario or farther west. The effect is, of course, to stimulate American shipments by the Canadian route to the disadvantage of the American lines and San Francisco boats. Unfortunately the arrangement does not work out quite so satisfactorily to the Canadian manufacturer. He finds the 'Frisco route is too expensive to be of use to him, and the difference of freight over Eastern-made goods to the United States border and to New York is a small item. It is expected that this loosely-worded regulation will be altered shortly.

From Fiji it is reported that the Vancouver Sugar Refining Company have recently purchased a large sugar mill and plantation with the object of controlling their own supply of raw sugar for their British Columbia refinery. Their plans include a large railway bridge, a substantial wharf and connecting railway line. The company have purchased in Sydney a bulk with capacity of 1,000 tons for storage and lightering. The enterprise will increase the importance of Fiji to the Canadian steamship line, and should indirectly lead to a large development in the Canadian exports to the islands of the Pacific.

The favorable prospects for the coming wheat harvest advised a few weeks ago are not quite confirmed by present indications, but farmers in the principal growing districts still look for a better than average crop. The wool crop is being cut, and an exceptional yield of high quality staple is assured.

Usual weather conditions in this country have been reversed of late, the coastal districts suffering for want of rain, while the interior, speaking generally, has had a good supply. As the coastal district is the seat of our dairying industries the production and export of butter is suffering.

Most of the minerals in which Australia is a producer are bringing high prices, and some expansion is expected as a result. The new Coppabella silver finds are attracting much attention, and the district is boomed as another Broken Hill, but reports go to show that while the surface prospects are most favorable, extensive shaft and tunnelling operations are needed to prove the value of the field.

F. W.

Sydney, Sept. 11, 1905.

OUR HALIFAX LETTER.

A proposal is on foot here to erect a memorial to Sir Samuel Cunard, the pioneer of Atlantic steam navigation, and a native of Halifax. Mr. E. L. Thorne, general manager of the Union Bank of Halifax, has been appointed treasurer for the Cunard Statue Fund, and subscription lists are about to be opened. Such a subscription might well be a national one, and the response should be liberal. Sir Samuel Cunard was one of the most sagacious, far-seeing business men this continent has produced, and one whose renown is well worthy of perpetuation.

The unusually heavy purchases of lambs in this Province lately is supposed to be due to an attempt of American speculators to corner the meat market, if such a thing is possible. There is a great scarcity of lambs on the United States market, and there have been a number of Americans, representing large firms, going through this Province buying all the lambs available at good prices. The supply here has been short owing to the great scarcity of feed last winter, and the market is now about bare.

The coast is infested with enormous shoals of dogfish, and the fishermen are devoting their time to the capture of the destructive pests. The dogfish reduction works at Canso are running night and day. Two members of the United States Fisheries Department have been spending some time inspecting the works and investigating the manner of coping with the dogfish pest. They are making exhaustive enquiries, and it is thought possible that some joint action may be taken by Canada and the States to rid Atlantic waters of the dogfish, which description of shore shark infests the Atlantic coast of the United States as well as Canada.

Judgment has been given in the Admiralty Court on the collision case between the steamers "Parisian" and "Albano." The collision took place off Chebucto Head last March. Mr. Justice McDonald places the whole blame on the "Albano," damages to be assessed later. Commander Finling, R.N.R., nautical adviser of the court, placed the responsibility on the "Parisian."

The Provincial Exhibition this year closed with a greater deficit than has been. The weather was unfavorable during nearly the whole eight days, and the attendance was "away off" in consequence. Next year, with a Dominion exhibition to finance and provide for, it is expected the deficit will be a startling one, and will result in the exhibition being held only every two years thereafter. At the present time the small county exhibitions are being held throughout the Province, and with the extremely beautiful weather which has prevailed for the past ten days have enjoyed a good deal of success.

College extension work is attracting a good deal of notice here at the present time. Both Dalhousie and King's have invaded Cape Breton to do work among the miners, and are taking up the work which has to a large extent been done in the past by American correspondence schools. The Dalhousie evening schools at Springhill, Cumberland county, and Stellarton, Pictou county, coal mines, were opened last week under most favorable circumstances, and the classes in Cape Breton have been going on for some time. The classes are supplementary to the Government mining and night schools, and cover such subjects as mining, metallurgy, chemistry, geology, mathematics, mechanics, etc.

The "Agnes Donohue," the Nova Scotia sealer, which, with her captain and crew, was seized in Buenos Ayres for alleged seal poaching, has been released after more than a year of effort, and has sailed for this port.

The eastern part of the Province is much elated over the great discovery of coal recently made at Stellarton. For a long time search has been made for the seam which had to be abandoned many years ago, when the Ford pit exploded and was inundated. At last it has been found. At a distance of over 1,200 feet a seam of magnificent coal, nearly forty feet thick, has been found, and the whole county of Pictou is rejoicing thereat.