

specific articles, four out of his seven columns in the *Globe* being devoted to detail as to possible imports or exports. He says, "for mackerel, shad and our lake fish packed in brine (like salmon) and done up in small firkins or kegs, Canadians will find in Australia a wide market." But, he adds, the fish must be of good quality and carefully packed. In N.S.W. alone over \$330,000 worth of condensed milk is consumed per annum. We can supply part of this. As to field implements for farmers, the Massey-Harris Company have shown what energy can do in securing part of the trade the United States have so long held. In the articles of hardware and woodenware Mr. Troop sees an opening for us; chopping axes and pick axes, and hickory handles for these; edge tools, hammers, saws, locks, brooms, tubs, wringers and mangles are only a few of the articles in his list. The Americans have a good hold in these and other like wares, and we cannot displace them without an effort. United States makers have glutted the market with buggies and light two-wheeled vehicles, while as for farm wagons and carts the Australians make them for themselves. Fine carriages they mostly procure from England. But carriage materials are an item of extensive import, and these we might send. Upholstered furniture does not offer much encouragement, although "plain furniture, shipped in a 'knocked-down' condition, has a good chance." Australians do not import mahogany, preferring walnut for this purpose. Very little of oak or ash should be sent; wooden bedsteads are not used in that country. Canadians have the best prospects for office, library and school furniture, all shipped "knocked down." American boots and shoes of stylish make are taking well in competition with English, and no wonder. Inasmuch as our best makers produce foot-wear closely resembling the American, we, too, should have a part of this trade. High prices will be paid, but we are warned "to send only the most superior make." Seal jackets are much worn by Australasians, while black and white Astrachan furs are both popular. Bass' ale and Guinness' stout are everywhere used in those colonies, and German beer and lager have obtained a strong hold, having displaced the American, which did not keep well. "Canadian beer is practically unknown in Australia. It has only to be well introduced and pushed to gain an enduring hold on the market." Whiskey does not appear to be liked as a beverage by our far away cousins; its consumption is decreasing. Perhaps this is in some degree a result of the views of the physicians, who consider the use of whiskey in that climate dangerous, and who, like the dear sisters of a British Methodist Episcopal Church on a certain occasion, "hab done expressed a prefrunce foh gin." Walker's Club whiskey is however on that market. Bell organs from Guelph are well known there; why not also Canadian pianos? Wearing apparel is another item in which there seems to be encouragement for our exporters.

One thing which Mr. Troop has not mentioned in his list of Australian imports is paper. We can hardly compete just yet with Great Britain in furnishing writing papers, but we ought to be able to furnish more cheaply than any other nation, except perhaps Sweden, printing and wrapping papers, and so get a share of the \$2,500,000 worth of "paper and manufactures of" that Australasia imports annually. Printing paper is almost everywhere admitted free of duty; other kinds pay from 12½ to 25 per cent.

We have given as much space as we can to-day to this subject. But we shall take an early opportunity of discussing Mr. Bowell's report, and hope to present some considerations that may increase the interest of our commercial bodies in the matter. It is satisfactory to know that Mr. Larke is shortly to visit Australia as a commissioner from

our Government. He has a fair knowledge of the general subject, which he is taking pains to increase; and what is more, he has some business-like ideas of how he should proceed when he gets there, which has much to do with the success of any errand such as that on which he presently goes.

#### AN ASSESSMENT ASSURANCE COMPANY FAILS.

Another of the Canadian assessment organizations has succumbed, showing the weakness of the system for life assurance purposes. The Canadian Relief Society was organized in April, 1886, and incorporated in November of the same year. It undertook to give sick benefits as well as funeral benefits, and made contracts for endowment assurance. For seven years the society went on, and reached a membership of almost 2,000. At the close of 1891 it had 1,758 contracts in force, representing \$1,764,888, and added during 1892 contracts, new or renewed, 268 for \$239,850. Thus they had a total liability of \$2,004,188 for contracts on foot at close of 1892. Fifteen members died in 1892, and funeral benefits to the amount of \$650 were paid. Six members' wives died in the same year, and \$550 was disbursed for their funeral benefits. And there were 201 members who received sick benefits during 1892. The number of weeks of their illnesses aggregated 1,482, and the aggregate sum paid that year in respect of sick members was \$8,687. Considering this state of things, and the obligations it implied, one naturally would expect to find more assets in sight than the \$1,237 in bank and the \$8,465 represented by furniture, stationery, and unpaid assessments, totalling \$4,702. The immediate recorded liabilities at that date [end of 1892] were \$3,558, being \$568 for various sick claims, and \$2,990 for "supposed or reported" claims. But they are much more now.

It appears that the scale of sick benefits was begun on too generous a scale by this society. The more sanguine or soft-hearted among the managers had too much charity, were very free with the money of the members, and in their excessive generosity placed the figure at \$10. Later this was reduced to \$7; but the more level-headed ones began to see that even this was more than the concern could stand; for unexpected ailments developed, sick claims came in at a rate quite unexpected, and death claims were more frequent than the surviving members liked, and the sum was further reduced. Then the usual thing happened, as it must always happen in "pass the hat" societies: "the country members kicked," as one of the managers expressed it, at the too frequent assessments, or else they refused quietly. In any case the assessments levied did not come in, the membership fell off, and troubles began to accumulate. Puzzled to know what was best to be done to face a growing liability and prospective law suits, some of the members went in June last to Mr. Hunter, the Ontario Inspector of Insurance, to ask his opinion, and he, it appears, advised them to cease operations.

The membership of the Canadian Relief Society has shrunk to the neighborhood of 600, while there is a liability resting upon them of some \$25,000. This, it appears, is to be collected by means of the courts if necessary. The situation is a commentary upon the system of so-called cheap assessmentism. So far as we can learn, the finances of the society have been administered with honesty, and its management has striven to carry out what was promised to its members. But when the financial strain overcame the philanthropic instincts of the contributors, they began to leave the ship; and it appears that the six hundred who are left can, according to the judgment of an American court, be compelled to make good the liabilities of the asso-