

been rendered. A contractor named McSharry sued the Railway Commissioners of New South Wales for amounts alleged to be due him. The case was referred to arbitration, and it has continued for nearly three years, although the court sat for only 323 days. The counsel on both sides occupied no less than 88 days in the closing speeches. The award was made only on the last day allowed by law. The award was for £13,000, less than one-tenth of the claim. The costs are not fully known, but are said to be over one hundred thousand pounds. Half a million dollars costs in a law suit of that size ought to be a record. The case had a political issue. The sole arbitrator was Mr. Barton, who was the leader of the Federal party, in opposition to the Government, at the last election. The leading counsel on both sides of this case supported him. Accordingly, they were attacked with the charge that they dragged out the case in their own interest. There can be no doubt that it affected the result of the election.

Since the above was written there has been a change in the weather, and nearly the whole colony has been visited by bountiful rains, and the outlook is improved.

F. W.

Sydney, New South Wales, 24th Oct., 1898.

ANIMATED BANKING PROCEEDINGS.

When we bear in mind the discreet, calm, not to say dignified, manner, in which bankers are supposed to proceed in matters of business: when we further consider the relation in which bankers frequently stand to their customers, in matters social, as well as financial, say, as advisers arbitrators, father-confessors, in fact, it seems curious to hear that these same bankers, to whom we look up as fountains of wisdom and discretion, are almost as human and selfish as ourselves. It is only the other day that the president of the Canadian Bankers' Association referred, in his retiring address, to the excessive competition between banks as "a subject for serious consideration," expressing the conviction that "there are times and opportunities when we could swell our business without cutting into that of a confrere." Instances of this competition are not far to seek.

From a despatch of November 2nd, to the *Rosland Miner*, printed elsewhere, we learn something of the frantic rush made by different banks to be first in the field at a little spot in the far West of Canada. The Bank of British North America has given its sound Scotch training to many valued Canadian bankers. And we have been accustomed to look to men so trained, for not only sound financial views, but for serenity of demeanor and dignity of procedure, as essentials. What, then, are we to think when we hear of this venerable bank, whose employees should be as grave as Sunday school teachers, "starting a branch in a *Rosland* barber shop," in order to get ahead of its competitors; sending a staff per express to the *ultima Thule* of Behring Sea to establish them, first, in a tent, then in a log hut at Dawson; authorizing their manager, Mr. Cameron, at Greenwood, in the delectable (B.C.), mountains, to put out a cotton sign and to receive gold or cash cheques on a billiard table? And how can we continue our belief in the fitness of things, when we are told, in print, that the Canadian Bank of Commerce, whose authorities are really worthy men, permitted their Greenwood emissaries to do a banking business on the dining tables of a restaurant, behind which sat, at the receipt of custom, two managers of other branches, who pass, when at home, for dignified exemplars of the science of banking? How is it we do not read anything about the Bank of Montreal in this connection. It, also, has a branch at Greenwood. Were its officers smiling superior at the rivals who had to use billiard tables for counters, or did the billiard table fellows get ahead of them?

It is permitted us to hope that the game is worth the candle. Nay, we may readily believe that directors and head officers in the East, and subordinates, who are on the spot in the West, being possessed collectively of a reasonable share of business sense, would not go to all this trouble, hurry and expense, if there were not prospects of making \pounds pay. This we think may be said, that the adventurous residents of our far West admire pluck as much as they enjoy novel enter-

prise. And we can imagine Kootenay Bill joining Stumpy and Red Dog Joe, in being first to welcome such well-dressed "tenderfeet," as had the "sand" to hang out their shingles in remote mining districts. Mr. Morris may have been welcomed, in the language of such districts, by: "Say, boys, here's another financial sharp comin', the sluice-robber on Van Godfrey. He's got a lay-out down yer to the Cosmo-politan; let's go down an' see that he don't jump Van's claim. He's got to hev a show, ef he's squar. Mebbe he'd set em up, too. Ef he don't, we'll go and round up the gang over to the Laplante."

SPRING SHADES.

The Paris fashion makers have issued an edict in regard to colors for the spring season, for an account of which we are indebted to the Dry Goods Economist. The color cards just issued for spring show most prominently lavenders and pinkish mauves, china blue, purples and pinks. Light grays are prominent, while but little attention is given to brown shades. This information as to the tints with which French manufacturers will endeavor to attract trade on spring textiles, is borne out by the study of the reference card from which all the syndicate cards are compiled.

As usual, the system—or rather lack of system—of nomenclature employed is wholly arbitrary. This practice of naming new colors is very inconvenient to the trade, and a new plan ought to be devised. Incidents of the war with Spain are recalled by some of the names. So far as dress goods are concerned, the colors selected by the potentates of Paris for the coming spring season are grays, tans, and the four high shades of national and Cervera blue. The fabric world is evidently to have a repetition of the pompadour designs that so largely obtained during the reigns of Louis XV. and XVI. As these comprised wreaths, flowers, and bow-knot effects, they will naturally be expressed in natural colors of flowers, such as roses, violets, cowslips, poppies, butter-cups, etc.

The high novelties in silks will comprise a combination of black and white, combined with natural floral shades, the effect of which will be very striking. Tans and grays are also set down as certain favorites in silk materials. Pelouse, a grass-green, is also announced as a Paris favorite. Mouravief, a high shade of green, is another of the colors elevated to a high position. Rose shades have also been placed on a high pedestal. It is confidently asserted that cerise is to be numbered among the spring colors. Indian, a greenish blue, in the highest tones, is said to be another of the favorites in Paris.

Maize may be set down as particularly desirable, and aurora, another shade of the same family, is a color calculated to be affected for millinery purposes. Crocus will also vie with the two foregoing shades for recognition in millinery goods.

The nine foregoing high shades will, doubtless, be given prominence by milliners, for the reason that they will give life to the colors outlined for costumes.

CONSIGNORS MOURN.

Two weeks ago we recorded the absence of an American adventurer, who, passing in Toronto as a commission merchant, had managed to obtain considerable produce from country shippers and then left for parts unknown. This lesson might have served to recall other instances of serious losses incurred by trusting firms of no standing, with farm products, and impressed shippers with the importance of sending their goods to only reliable merchants. This week another example of misplaced confidence has been given the trade. Some five weeks ago, a firm styled Campbell, Davidson and Company, began business in Toronto. Advertisements were placed in the country papers, soliciting consignments, attractive circular letters were written to parties in different towns, appointing them agents to secure shipments of products. The prospective agents were offered liberal terms—fifteen dollars a month and two per cent. on all consignments. A multitude of agents were obtained, and offering prices several cents per pound in advance of mar-