

ing the smartest tailor cloths shown. Striped cheviots, cloths in navy blue and white, and black and white and grey, are novelties that have been taken up by high-class houses. There are a number of cloths with a zibeline surface on to which plain figures are introduced, and white "snowflake" effects on mixed tweed grounds are shown exclusively by one house, these bearing but faint resemblance to the old woollens manufactured under this name. We were inundated with canvas fabrics during the past season, and they are still to the fore, but more closely woven and heavier in weight, while a number of those I have come across have a black seaweed or small conventional design in the canvas weave, but in black on a colored ground. Again, we see this weave in conjunction with matelasse effects, which, I suppose, must be considered great novelties, though they are but a revival of very old favorites. For mantles, as well as for carriage pelisses, silk and wool matelasse cloths in black and colors are being shown; the latter in dark combinations and in most delicate shades for opera wraps, cream and gold, blue and white, pink, or heliotrope, are charming mixtures, the design being in silk with a woolen basket ground. Silk and mohair enters into the composition of a number of the most modish fabrics. The basket weave again comes out in that striking matelasse skirt cloth, a Parisian novelty, which is woven with bright yarn, and has a check design formed from a contrast color on the dark ground. Tinsel and wool broches are new, as are the chine zibelines with floral designs, and on many of the black checks bright-colored metallic effect and pin spots in silk appear. Yet those who cater for the best class of trade are undoubtedly right in their opinion that the best and smartest dresses will be selected from plain doeskin or Venetians such as I have named, or from the open coarse hopsacking.

#### OUR AUSTRALIAN LETTER.

A very curious controversy has raged for the past two months over the financial statement of this colony. The Premier, who is also Treasurer, in his budget speech, claimed that he rounded up the year with a surplus of over three hundred thousand pounds, and to prove it the money was actually in the bank. His critics, and a couple of them were of his own party, but not his followers, as distinctly averred that he was all wrong, and as a matter of fact, he had gone to the bad by a million of pounds sterling. So warmly did the debate continue in its uncertainty, that the Premier wrote to the leading bankers asking them to decide, but these discreet gentlemen refused to interfere. The whole matter was in reality a war of words and not blundering book-keeping. In the past, estimates carried expenditures for public works that had three years to run. Thus, an appropriation made in 1893 was good up to the end of 1895. The present Government proposed to change all this and introduce what it termed the spot cash system, whereby an appropriation expired at the end of the year for which it was granted. To do so, the Premier said he must start with a clean sheet, and he got Parliament to empower him to borrow a million of pounds to wipe off a standing deficit against past years. It turns out the most of the million was expended this year, though as he claims, on appropriations passed by his predecessors in 1893. His opponents contend that his predecessors would not have expended all of these sums if they had remained in office, and that by doing so, he really saved some expenditure which he would have had to make, and therefore, these should be charged to last year's accounts, and not to those of 1893. The new system will prevent such discussion in the future, but the incident illustrates the conservatism of things here, when it is only to-day that the "spot cash system" is being introduced.

One thing is undeniable—the budget shows a better condition of things than was anticipated. This is the case in all the colonies but Victoria. They all closed the financial years with surpluses despite the drought, except Victoria, where its railway revenue went badly behind. These facts may be taken as evidence that the times have taken a turn for the better, and though the upward progress is slow, it appears to be certain. The drought has been broken, and favorable rains have fallen generally over the country.

A land that had passed so easily through a year when right on the heels of the collapse of 1893 there followed a drought that in this colony alone destroyed ten million sheep and lambs, reduced its export of wool by one hundred thousand bales, and made it an enormous importer of food products, is clearly a land of great resources. The failures have been few, the bank stocks are higher than a year and a half ago, and trade is generally sound.

The last Canadian steamer had on board a cargo of two thousand tons, nearly all Canadian goods. Her holds were full, and the cabins not required for passengers were used for storing freight likewise, and then a considerable quantity of much needed goods were left on the wharf. The bulk of the cargo consisted of wheat and flour from Manitoba. As this line has not been able to meet the demands on its ships for space, goods are now coming here via China and Japan, the Empress

line taking it from Vancouver to Hong Kong, and then by a line of Chinese steamers to this port.

Canadian productions are now finding their way to Australia by nine different routes. I have previously referred to the great importance of studying this freight problem. It is not only as respects rate, but time is an important element to be considered. A Canadian firm who could not get enough space for an important consignment of goods via Vancouver, had offers to land them here in sixty days from New York, and accepted the proposal. The goods have now been three months en route from the factory, and will not be here for five weeks yet. This is a serious matter for the firm, as it has prevented orders promised from being filled, and has completely upset its business for the time. It is likely to go back again to the Vancouver route if space can be had.

It is anticipated that the third ship of the Canadian-Australian line will leave this port on her first trip in January next. The sailings will then be every fourth week instead of monthly as now, and will alternate with the Frisco line, making a fortnightly mail. This will shorten correspondence by two weeks and very much facilitate business.

The last steamer brought out not only the largest but the most varied shipment of Canadian goods yet reaching this port. As passengers, it also brought the representatives of three manufacturing firms who are now diligently at work. Two represented, besides other articles, makers of bicycles, making four Canadian factories now represented here; the third was from a drug house in the interest of patent medicines. Three Canadian drug houses have their travellers here. One representative who has been here for some time has secured a good business. The others are laying the foundations as yet.

The Government of this colony have given an order to have their public schools equipped with Canadian desks. Heretofore they have been locally made, and to get this order required a great deal of patience and perseverance, and was a pretty good testimonial to the character of the goods. If they had not been immensely superior to those in use they would not have been ordered. Travellers from the United States have attempted to introduce desks into the colonies, but have failed.

Canada is becoming better known than heretofore, but there is much to be done still. A Canadian went to enter a considerable lot of goods from Canada at the customs. As it was his first transaction an officer of the Department kindly offered to fill up the paper. When coming to the blank for place of origin, the official was told "Canada." "Ah yes," he said, "that is part of America," and he calmly filled in the blank "United States," and if the Canadian had not insisted upon Canada being substituted, "United States" it would have remained.

W. B.

Sydney, Sept. 10th, 1896.

#### EXPERIENCE DOES IT—SOMETIMES.

"I began business life young," said the proprietor of the store as he put his hand on the shoulder of a little lad who had just come in, and asked with a kind smile what he wanted to buy. "You see, I had saved up eight dollars, when yet quite a boy, which sum I invested, and I made four dollars profit with it. That was my first venture—my first commercial *experience*. I was able to manage those eight dollars successfully. Then I launched out with the twelve, and in a week had made those twelve up to sixteen. Not so good profit as the first off-go, but still fair—I wish it were possible now-a-days to get such profits. Again I had handled capital—this time one-half larger than the last I had made it earn; my experience was equal to the handling of twelve dollars. This encouraged me; I invested once more, and in a few months I found my little business had grown, my profits keeping pace with it, for I managed it myself and was not *killed out* with competition. Soon my little trade enabled me to buy a hundred dollars worth, and my capacity grew accordingly, for I continued to make profit on the larger scale. Unconsciously I was learning week by week, not only how to handle goods, do you see, but how to handle customers. And one thing I recognize now—and many merchants would be better off if they did the same—is that my experience kept pace with my capital. What I mean is this: When I had used my first eight dollars I had eight dollars' experience in merchandising *at a profit*. Then when I had acquired a capital of fifty dollars I had learned how to handle fifty dollars *profitably*. And so on into hundreds and thousands. Now, some of my neighbors, in different lines of trade, have been doing business these thirty years. Some have succeeded, but more have failed, and the reason they failed was, in my judgment, that their experience was not equal to the scale of their business—one moment, please."

The proprietor darted off to serve a lady who had quietly entered, and whom the clerks either had not seen or were too busy to wait upon. He had learned how to wait upon two or three customers at once, this man (who, I admiringly say, is one of the best salesmen I ever knew),