of the petition against the alteration had since admitted signing under the erroneous belief that the council intended increasing the dues. The committee listened to the views of both sides, but came to no decision yesterday.

At a meeting of the executive committee of the Melbourne Total Abstinence Society held on Wednesday night, it was resolved that a letter should be sent to the Rev. W. Gray Dixon, congratulating him on the steps he was taking to induce the young men of Warrnambool to become total abstainers.

There was a large audience in the Town-hall yesterday afternoon at the organ recital, at which Mr. R. J. Shanks, sub-organist at St. Paul's Cathedral, was the performer. First on the programme was an organ concerto in D minor (Handel), the Andante Rissoluto receiving scholarly treatment, the Larghetto being played with sympathetic understanding, whilst the concluding Fugue was given with musically comprehension. The concerto was succeeded by artistic renderings of No. 3 in F minor and No. 4 in D flat major of Schumann's four sketches, op. 58. Mr. Shanks was scarcely so successful with Chipp's adaptation of the Andante (known as the "Pilgrims' March") from Mendelssohn's "Italian" symphony, which sounded at times rather suggestive of a forced march. The late Mr. Best's concert Fugue on a trumpet Fanfare was brilliantly played, and tasteful treatment was afforded to the Schubertian "Rosamunde" entr'acte in B flat. A skilful performance of an offertoire "Hosannah" (Lemmens) formed a worthy conclusion to an interesting programme.

The first of the series of Continental Concerts which are to be given in the Exhibition Oval, in connection with the Aquarium, will be given on Saturday evening next. The trustees are having the Aquarium and Jermery lit up with the electric light specially for the occasion, so that this favourite place of resort will be seen under specially cool and novel conditions. Mr. W. J. Turner, musical director, has arranged with the following artists to appear:—Mesdames Maggie Stirling, Minnie Waugh, Charlotte Hemming, Theodora Frick, and Maggie Curtis, and Messrs. Napoleon, E. Boffard, and Robottaro. The Railways Military Band will give selections.

A concert in aid of the Gippsland Fires Relief Fund was held in St. Kilda Town-hall on Wednesday night. The attendance was large, and the financial results will be satisfactory. Councillor Drakard delivered a lecturette on the fires, which was illustrated by limelight views, the originals of which appeared in "The Australasian," and were lent by the proprietors of that journal.

We have received £7 from J.M., to be distributed as follows:—Melbourne Hospital, £2; Children's Hospital, £2 10s.; Women's Hospital, £1 10s.; Alfred Hospital, £1; Austin Hospital, £1.

Owing to the steamer Otone having been chartered for to-morrow there will be no boat to Schnapper Point, but the Hygeia, proceeding to Queenscliff and Sorrento, will run on Saturday, leaving the pier at 5.30 p.m. for Melbourne direct.

Auction sales to-day:—Naylor, Forbes, and Co., at their rooms, at 11, books; at 2, pictures. Gemmell, Tuckett, and Co., at their rooms, at 11, furniture. Beauchamp Brothers, their usual weekly sale.

Mr. W. Leeming having purchased a large stock of boots and shoes, notifies on page 10 of this issue the sale thereof, at the Colonnade, Errol-street, North Melbourne.

TO-DAY'S ARRANGEMENTS.

Federal Convention, Parliament-house, 10.30 a.m.
Fire Inquiry Board, Law Courts, 10.30 a.m.
Marine Board, Custom-house, 2 p.m.
Garden Party to the Convention Delegates, Parliament-house Gardens, 3 p.m.
St. Paul's Cathedral.—Evensong (Choral) at 4.45 p.m. Service, King in F. Anthem, "Come Unto Him" (Gounod).
Freetrade Democratic Association Council Meeting, 325 Collins-street, 8 p.m.
Trades-hall Council, Trades-hall, 8 p.m.
Law Courts. See Law Notices, page 5.
Auction Sales. See Abstract, page 2.

MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE.

CONFERENCE IN MELBOURNE.

A conference of Ministers of Agriculture was held last night at the Government offices. There were present Mr. Sydney Smith, representing New South Wales; Mr. Taverner, Victoria; Mr. A. J. Thynne, Queensland; and Dr. Cockburn, South Australia. Sir Edward Braddon, the Minister for Agriculture in Tasmania, was unable to be present, but he will attend the sitting of the conference to-day, when the subjects affecting the interests of that colony will be considered. Mr. Taverner was appointed chairman, and the question of the tick pest, which has caused the death of many cattle in Queensland, was discussed, with the view to measures being taken to prevent it spreading to the southern colonies. Reference was made to the experiments in inoculating cattle conducted in Queensland by Dr. Hunt and Mr. Pounds, the Government experts, and the results obtained. The further consideration of the subjects was postponed till to-day. So also was the discussion on the report on the Agricultural Produce (Marks) Bill, which was recently before the House of Commons, dealing with the branding of colonial and foreign produce. The conference rose at 11 p.m., and the sitting to-day will no doubt extend well into the evening, as in addition to these two matters the Ministers have to consider the questions of a reduction in ocean freights, the action of the War Office in discouraging the use of Australian leather, and a joint display in London of Australian produce.

SMALL-POX ON A STEAMER.

THE M.M.S. CALEDONIES AT ADELAIDE.

Dr. Gresswell, the chairman of the Board of Public Health, received information yesterday as to a case of small-pox having been discovered on the French mail steamer Caledonien on her arrival at Adelaide on Wednesday morning. The patient—one of the Lascar crew—was removed to the quarantine station at Torrens Island, and the vessel left Adelaide for Melbourne yesterday. It appears that there is only one passenger for Melbourne on the ship, and the local agent will endeavour to persuade him to go on to Sydney, as there are several passengers for that port. As soon as the Caledonien arrives here the cargo for Melbourne will be lightered and fumigated in quarantine in the outer anchorage by men recently vaccinated. When they have done their work they will be disinfected before being released. After this operation the vessel, with the rest of her crew, and the whole of her passengers, will go on to Sydney.

ADELAIDE, Thursday.

The agents of the F.M.S. Caledonien, on which cases of small-pox occurred, are anxious that eight of the crew who came in contact with the patient should be landed at Torrens Island, so as to curtail the period of quarantine in Melbourne. Dr. Toll does not think it desirable that the lascars should be landed here, nor would the last of their disembarking shorten the quarantine period of the vessel at the next port of call.

The Caledonien left Adelaide this afternoon for Melbourne. Every precaution was taken in regard to the small-pox. The mails were fumigated prior to their despatch to the eastern colonies.

THE LAST TEST MATCH.

BRISBANE, Thursday.

The secretary of the Brisbane Cricket-ground has received a letter from Major Wardill stating that the fifth test match has been postponed to the 26th inst. to enable "Trott" and other players to take part in a match in Brisbane on the 19th.

THE PRICE OF WHEAT.

ECHUCA, Thursday.

A heavy fall has taken place in the price of wheat. The price to-day is only 3/11.

FIRES IN THE COUNTRY.

COLAC, Thursday.

Mr. Brennan, a farmer at Corunnun, near Colac, had 450 bags of barley destroyed by fire at 3 o'clock to-day. It was stacked in a shed, and the whole of it was consumed. It is supposed that somebody camped close by left a fire, which spread to the stack.

THE LEVIATHAN CLOTHING COMPANY, HIGH-CLASS TAILORS.

Are now showing new season's Tweeds, Coatings, Serges, Worsted Trouserings, &c. All-wool lac Suits, to measure, 42s. Special line of Trousers, to measure, 12s. 6d. —[Advt.]

MR. FOSTER IN BENDIGO.

TRIBUTE CLAUSES OF THE MINES ACT.

VEILED THREATS.

BENDIGO, Thursday.

Mr. Foster, the Minister of Mines, visited Bendigo to-day to inquire into the working of the tribute clauses of the new Mines Act. He was met at the station by the local members of Parliament, and in the evening met representatives of the Miners' Association in the commercial-room of the Shamrock Hotel. Messrs. Abbott, M.L.C., Sterry, Hamilton, and Bailes, M.L.A.'s, Mr. W. Abraham, mining inspector, and Mr. W. S. Cundy, mining surveyor, were also present.

Mr. Foster stated that he had come on the invitation of the Miners' Association to explain the tribute sections, concerning which so much misapprehension existed. As his coming had been made public by the press he had hoped to meet all parties interested, and was very sorry to note the absence of the representatives of the Mine-owners' Association.

Mr. Praed, the secretary of the A.M.A., informed Mr. Foster that a fortnight ago the local branch had decided to invite him to visit Bendigo and explain the tributing clauses of the new act to representatives of the association and of the Mine Managers and Mine-owners' associations. Copies had been sent to both the associations named, and the latter had written stating their inability to obtain a quorum for the appointment of representatives. He (Mr. Praed) stated on their behalf what clauses they took exception to.

Mr. Foster, in reply, remarked that the mine-owners were merely tenants of the Crown, and held their titles on certain conditions, and it would go hard with them if they were held strictly to the letter of the law. They frequently asked for and received concessions and indulgences greater than any asked for by the working miners. Before Parliament stepped in tributers in Bendigo were working without a written agreement, and some very hard cases had occurred, companies sometimes going back on their verbal agreements. Tributers had also been given a percentage only of the free gold, while now half of the concentrates and plates was also secured to them. The percentage to the owner had now also to be on the net profit, and not on the gross as hitherto. It had been said that the companies would be the first to create trouble and expense in drawing up agreements, but forms might be obtained gratis from the department capable of being filled up in two minutes. A complaint had been made that the sanction of the Minister must be obtained for the letting of every tribute. That was not so. The owner might let 50 tributes if he had once obtained permission to let portions of the mine on tribute, and it was only right that the Government, as landlord, should have to give consent before the tenant could sub-let any portion of the tenancy. The clause that was the root of the trouble was the so-called sustenance clause, which secured to the unfortunate tributers half wages. It had been suggested that each crushing should "stand on its own bottom," but such an arrangement would be a fatal blow to the principle of the bill, by which it was intended that when sufficient gold had been obtained by a party of tributers all arrears should be paid. By this means alone would half wages be secured to the tributers. If any defect was to be found in the act he was prepared to make the administration of it more elastic, or to have it amended. He was prepared to meet the mine-owners and hear their views, and would come again and again if necessary for the purpose. He closed with a reminder to the owners, which he was careful to say was in no sense a threat, that many leases would be falling in shortly, and that it was possible for the Minister to refuse a renewal of them, or to grant it only upon certain conditions.

In answer to a question, Mr. Foster said that tributers would not need to wait for the consent of the Minister to agreements, but might commence work as soon as the agreement was signed.

Mr. Praed pointed out that it was publicly stated that companies had asked the department for a permit to let tributes under the act, and had in reply been asked to forward the conditions of the agreements proposed. This was attributed by the Minister to the action of some clerical officer of the department, who had acted in the matter without consulting himself or the permanent head of the department.

This concluded the business of the conference.

GEORGE GIFFEN.

WILL NOT VISIT MELBOURNE AND SYDNEY.

A QUESTION OF EXPENSES.

ADELAIDE, Thursday.

When the members of the intercolonial cricket team for the eastern colonies were chosen, the ground and finance committee of the South Australian Cricketing Association met, and decided to inform each man that all railway and hotel expenses would be paid, and they would be allowed 7/6 a day for personal expenses. In addition, they were notified that if any particular cricketer could show that he was losing more than 7/6 per day, the amount of the difference would be paid. George Giffen intimated that he would require £25 for the two matches, instead of a daily allowance, but the committee said they could not see their way clear to grant this amount, so the champion will not make the trip. The selectors have chosen Victor Hugo, a promising all-round player, to fill the vacancy. Every other man picked will make the trip.

TASMANIA.

ZEEHAN, Thursday.

A peculiar accident occurred at the Commonwealth mine, North Dundas, last night. Two miners named Dobie and Smith had cleaned up the debris from a shot that had been fired by the previous shift, and finding about fifty of the drill-hole left intact they took advantage of it for the next hole, and started making it deeper. An explosion occurred, and drove the hammer back into Dobie's face. His injuries are likely to prove fatal.

NEW ZEALAND.

AUCKLAND, Thursday.

Sir Robert Stout, in an address to the electors of Wellington, announces his intention of resigning his seat in Parliament. He says his duty to his family necessitates his devoting for some time to come his whole attention to business, but he hopes as a private citizen to assist in promoting the progress of the city and the colony.

Mr. J. A. Henderson, the Government poultry expert, died to-day.

Farewell Spit reports that the schooner Sir Henry passed east last night, and signalled that her sails had been blown away.

MAIL STEAMERS.

The German mail steamer Prinz Regent Luitpold left Suez for Australia on 31st.

R.M.S. Duke of Devonshire left Port Said on 1st inst. for London.

THE SEWER DISASTER.

We have received the following additional subscriptions towards the Sewer Disaster Fund:—

Amount previously acknowledged	£139 14 9
James Anderson	1 1 0
Mrs. M. A. Lewtas	1 1 0
H.G.	0 10 0
A.M.A.	0 5 0
"Sympathy," N.S.W.	0 2 0
"A Widow's Mite"	0 2 6
MICHAEL HOARE FUND.	
Mary Lorden	0 5 0

CONGRESS TOBACCO. DARK OR AROMATIC. Beautifully cool and sweet smoking. Fascinating flavour. Acknowledged by experts to be "THE BEST." TO BE HAD EVERYWHERE. —[Advt.]

DON'T LOOK OLD. With advancing years greyness increases. Stop this with LOCKYER'S SULPHUR HAIR RESTORER, which darkens to the former colour and preserves the appearance.—[Advt.]

220,000 WORDS. The English language has reached 220,000 words, and is now far away the most comprehensive, expressive, powerful, and widespread language in the world, and is clearly destined to become the universal one. The 1,250,000 books in Gaze's Arcade, Melbourne, contain all these words in a hundred thousand various combinations. Call and choose from them.—[Advt.]

A GREAT AMERICAN WHEAT DEAL.

THE OPERATIONS OF YOUNG LEITER.

HE OUTWITS THE VETERANS.

HOLDS NINE MILLION BUSHELS.

Our cable messages have reported a masterly move in the wheat market by a Mr. Leiter, an American operator, the latest advice being to the effect that he claims to hold all the surplus wheat in the United States. Some very interesting particulars of this remarkable man and his coup are given by our New York correspondent, writing on January 2, as follows:—

The most interesting figure in the American wheat market during the past year has been young Joseph Leiter, the only son of a Chicago merchant prince, who has just beaten the veteran millionaire and speculator, Phil Armour, in a contest that required much nerve and millions of capital. The end of the year finds the young man in actual possession of 9,000,000 bushels of first-class wheat, all paid for, which he is shipping by rail to Atlantic ports and thence to Liverpool as fast as he can find vessels to carry it. When this boy—whose sister, by the way, is the wife of Mr. George Curzon, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs of England—came out of college four or five years ago, a tall, broad-shouldered and handsome fellow, he informed his father that he desired to go into business. Whereupon Mr. Leiter gave him 1,000,000 dollars. In two years he had lost three-quarters of it, but had gained much experience and wisdom. Then the money began to come back, and a year later he had doubled his original capital. He had made himself an expert in mining, electricity, rail-roading, and the financing of projects. The pleased father then intrusted to him the management of his entire estate—30,000,000 dollars, in various productive enterprises—and retired to Washington. In July last the young man entered the wheat market as a buyer, and the veterans marked him as their prey. But as time passed on he continually accumulated profits. He changed his holdings from month to month—at one time he was carrying 12,000,000 bushels—and finally confined his operations to wheat for December delivery. Armour, great in beef and pork and railroads, as well as in grain, continually sold to him, confidently expecting a decline. But the young man, whose fashionable clothing and manners gained for him the name of "the dude," had gauged the market correctly, and when December came he demanded his wheat. It was not in Chicago, but Armour undertook to deliver it there, and by great exertions he brought 5,000,000 bushels to the city storage warehouses in a short time. On December 31 Leiter had his wheat, and Armour had lost something more than 1,000,000 dollars. It then became known that the young man had already made contracts for the shipment of the greater part of the grain to the seaboard and to Europe. There he expects to take his profits. For the transportation of the grain to the coast thousands of cars and hundreds of trains will be required. Leiter's confidence in the value of the grain is so great that, while carrying these millions of bushels, he has bought 4,000,000 more for May.

KLONDIKE.

RELIEF FOR THE DIGGERS.

AN ARABIAN NIGHTS DREAM.

MARVELLOUS GOOD FORTUNE.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

NEW YORK, Jan. 2.

Canada and this country will work together for the relief of the Klondike miners. Each of the two Governments will equip an expedition (the Washington Congress has appropriated 200,000 dollars for the undertaking), and the two parties will start from the coast at Skagway on or about February 1. But it is probable that the wants of all who can pay for food will have been supplied by private enterprise before the arrival of the official expeditions. One Canadian adventurer will soon start from the coast with 60 tons of provisions, to be drawn on sledges by dogs, and several other purveyors having smaller quantities in charge are now on the way. These supplies will begin to arrive at the diggings in February, and such ventures promise to be profitable, as the price of flour and bacon at Dawson in November was one dollar a pound.

One of the fortunate Klondike miners celebrated Christmas here in an hotel. In March, 1896, James Clements, a railway brakeman, living at Los Angeles, California, borrowed 200 dollars, and started for Alaska by the land route from Dyea. The Klondike deposits had not then been found. He prospected at several places on the Yukon without success, and at last was attracted to the Klondike district, before winter set in, and at the time when the great discoveries on Bonanza Creek were made. Turning back from this creek, which was already covered with claims, he, with two or three companions, was the first to find the great wealth of Eldorado Creek, where he owns one of the richest claims in the entire Alaska field. Within four months 2,000,000 dollars was taken out of this Eldorado gravel. When Christmas came, a year ago, Clements knew that his fortune was made. But, with a great store of gold in his claim, he was living in a little cabin, and his Christmas dinner was a bit of caribou meat. He shivered while he ate it by the light of a tallow dip. He could not tell his wife of his good fortune, and he knew that she must be suffering for the necessities of life. The truth was that she was almost penniless. She and her little girl had eaten a Christmas dinner of bread and milk, and the child's Christmas presents were five cents' worth of candy and a home-made rag doll. Clements dreamed that night of a Christmas-tree, and last week he set up at his hotel here the tree of his dream. Attached to the branches were 30,000 dollars' worth of nuggets taken from his claim, and on the table at the base of the tree were scattered 750 coins of 20 dollars each made from the gold which he had washed out. Mrs. Clements wore a bracelet of 12 nuggets, and there was on exhibition the largest nugget yet found in Alaska. The child, so hungry a year ago, when a new rag doll was her only treasure, played merrily with the gold, crude and coined, which had come from the bleak claim in the north, where the poor brakeman of two years ago has at least 1,000,000 dollars on deposit in the frozen gravel.

TAMPERING WITH WATER SUPPLY.

A SERIOUS CASE.

STAWELL, Thursday.

In connection with the water supply the town sustained a most unfortunate loss some time on Wednesday, in the form of an escape of at least 100,000 gallons of water, which could not have occurred at a more inopportune time. One of the scour valves had been removed by means of a screw-wrench from the pipe track at Mokepilly Creek, the water having been diverted for several hours into the creek, which was in consequence, flooded. It is supposed that someone in the vicinity who required water removed the valve, and then found himself unable, in face of the flow of water, to replace it, and it is estimated that the water must have been running to waste for at least 12 hours. As a result of the loss, No. 1 reservoir is down 3ft. 9in., and No. 2 reservoir 2ft.

KANDY KOOLA TEA. The undoubted purity and merit of the Kandy Koola Tea is amply justified by its ever-increasing sale. The best judges of tea are unanimous in the opinion that it is the best obtainable in Australia.—[Advt.]

COOLGARDIE WATER SUPPLY.

PREPARATORY STEPS.

LONDON, Feb. 2.

Sir Malcolm Fraser, Agent-General for Western Australia, is obtaining plans and specifications for the pipes and pumping machinery for the Coolgardie water supply scheme, preparatory to calling for tenders in Europe and America.

The report of the three English engineers to whom the scheme was referred has been posted to the West Australian Government.

LONDON WOOL SALES.

CLOSE OF THE FIRST SERIES.

LONDON, Feb. 1.

At the wool sales to-day merinoes were slightly firmer. Good crossbreds were a halfpenny below top rates.

The following are the average prices for the fleece portions of the clips named:—Kallara, 6½d.; Katandra, 7¼d.; Stonyhurst, 7¾d.; Barraldine, 7¾d.; Tubbo, 8d.; Bandure, 8¼d.; Congbool, 11½d.

LONDON, Feb. 2.

The first series of colonial wool sales for 1898 closed to-day. The tone at the close was firm, and prices were unchanged.

LONDON, Feb. 3.

At the first series of colonial wool sales, which closed yesterday, out of the 171,000 bales available for sale only 139,000 bales were catalogued.

Of these 81,000 bales were bought for home consumption, 60,000 bales for the Continent, and 10,000 bales for America. Twenty thousand bales were held over for future consumption.

Merino wools show a rise of fully 10 per cent., and crossbreds of 5 per cent., on the closing rates of the December sales.

A feature of the sales has been the competition on the part of Yorkshire buyers for inferior and heavy conditioned merinoes.

In some quarters the advance which has taken place is attributed entirely to the short supplies, trade in the wool-manufacturing districts not having shown the improvement that was expected.

FORTHCOMING SALES.

LONDON, Feb. 2.

The third series of sales has been fixed to begin on May 3, and the fourth on June 28.

The list of new arrivals to be admitted will in each instance be closed on the day when 200,000 bales have arrived.

AVERAGE PRICES.

In addition to the average prices cabled from London by our own correspondent, and already published in "The Argus," the following averages have been cabled privately:—Yarrawonga, scoured (average the whole shipment), 16¾d.; Wingadee, 16¼d. for fleece, and up to 18d. for lambs'; Meningoorra, 15¾d.; Dungowan, 15¼d.; Strathdarr, 15d.; Aymma, 15d.; and Caledonia, 14¼d.; the last four being averages for whole shipment fleece, pieces, &c. In greasy, Welltown (Queensland), 242 of fleece at 9¾d., and 61 of broken at 9¼d.; Milray (over Wangaratta) 84 of fleece at 9¾d.; Yabtree, 104 of fleece at 10¾d.; Arranboovong, 72 of half-bred at 10¼d.; Elder, 48 of half-bred at 10¼d.; Terrick, 9¼d.; Eurella, 9¼d.; Caledonia, 8¾d.; and Mt. Morris, 8¼d.

PRIVATE ADVICES.

By Goldsbrough, Mort, and Company Limited:—"The third series of sales has been fixed to commence on 3rd May, the fourth on 28th June. Lists close in each instance on the day that 200,000 bales new arrivals are reported."

By Dalgety and Company Limited, dated February 1:—"The wool sale continue with a good attendance, and prices are firmly maintained. As at present arranged, the season will close on the 2nd inst. The third and fourth series of sales have been fixed to open on 3rd May and 28th June respectively, and the quantity for each of these sales is limited to 200,000 bales, so that the quantity be reached on or before the opening date; but in any case, the list will be closed on the day of the opening of the sales."

Received by the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company Limited, dated February 2:—"The sales closed firmly. Since close of last sale, super. merino greasy washed and scoured, medium and inferior merino washed and scoured, fine crossbred washed and scoured, are 1d. per lb. higher; medium and inferior merino greasy, fine crossbred greasy, merino slipe, super medium and inferior merino lambs' greasy, are ½d. to ¾d. per lb. higher. Other descriptions unchanged. The total quantity sold during the past sales is 151,000 bales, of which 69,000 bales have been taken for the Continent, and 10,000 bales for America. It is estimated that 20,000 bales have been held over for future disposal."

By the Union Mortgage and Agency Company of Australia Limited:—"The wool sales are closing firmly, and prices are fully equal to the best of this series. Out of 171,000 bales available, the home trade has taken 81,000, the Continent 60,000, and America 10,000, while 20,000 bales are held over for next sales. The third series of sales will open on the 3rd May, and the fourth series on the 28th June."

By the Australian Mortgage Land and Finance Company Ltd., from Messrs. Helmuth, Schwartze, and Co.:—"The 1st series of colonial wool sales for 1898 closed to-day, the market being firm, without further change. Prices are, on the average, higher by 5 to 10 per cent., compared with the closing rates of last series. For fine crossbreds prices are ½d. higher, but coarse crossbreds are unchanged. Out of 170,000 bales available for sale, 70,000 bales have been bought for export, and 80,000 bales for home consumption, 20,000 bales being held over. The third series has been fixed to commence on 3rd May, and the fourth series on 28th June. In each case the list of new arrivals will be closed on the day when 200,000 bales have arrived."

By Messrs. John Sanderson and Co., from their London firm (Messrs. Sanderson, Murray, and Co.), dated 2nd inst.:—"Sales have closed with rates practically unchanged. Greasy merino, market firm. The quantity held over for future disposal is estimated at 20,000 bales."

COMMERCIAL TELEGRAMS

LONDON, Feb. 2.

Tallow.—At to-day's auction sales of Australasian tallow the quantity offered was 1,725 casks, of which 350 casks were sold. Prices realised were as follows:—Fine mutton, 22-3; medium mutton, 20; fine beef, 20-3; medium beef, 18-6 per cwt.

Tallow Statistics.—Imports for the month of January, 7,743 casks; deliveries, 3,171 casks; total stock at the end of the month, 36,446 casks.

Copper Statistics.—The total supplies for the month of January amount to 15,158 tons. Total deliveries, including Chilian and North American, for all Europe, 17,467 tons. Stocks in France and England, including quantity advised from Chili and Australia, 29,746 tons. Quantity advised from Australia by mail and cable, 1,500 tons.

Tin Statistics.—The total stocks, including stocks in America and quantity afloat, amount to 30,706 tons. The quantity of Straits and Australian afloat is 3,117 tons. The quantity of Straits and Australian on spot and landing is 16,126 tons. The month's deliveries in London and Holland amount to 2,788 tons.

Wheat.—The American visible supply, east of the Rockies, is estimated at 51,105,000 bushels, against 52,149,000 bushels a week ago, and 68,100,000 bushels a year ago.

THE GOLD OUTPUT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

A "RECORD" MONTH.

PERTH, Wednesday.

The gold export for January, 1898, totalled 93,395oz., of the value of £354,902. Of this total 11,724oz. were the proceeds of ore treated in South Australia, 1,038oz. from ore treated in New South Wales, and 732oz. from ore reduced in England. The Esperance return was too late for inclusion. This total is much the highest on record, the former record being 75,845oz. in November last.

"DISFIGURED FOR LIFE" is the despairing cry of thousands afflicted with unsightly humours of the skin, scalp, and hair. Do you realise what this disfiguration means to sensitive souls? It means isolation, seclusion. It is a bar to social business success. Do you wonder that despair seizes upon these sufferers when doctors fail, standard remedies fail, and nostrums prove worse than useless? Skin humours are most obstinate to cure or even relieve. It is an easy matter to claim to cure them, but quite another thing to do so. CUTICURA alone has earned the right to be called Skin Specifics, because for years they have met with most remarkable success. There are cases they cannot cure, but they are few indeed. It is so long drawn-out expensive experiment. A warm bath with CUTICURA SOAP and a single anointing with CUTICURA, the great skin cure, at the greatest of skin cures, will prove more convincing in the strongest terms of itching, burning, bleeding, scaly, crusted, and pimply humours, with loss of hair, than pages of printed matter.—[Advt.]

THE FAR EAST.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

SYMPATHETIC FEELING.

"BLOOD THICKER THAN WATER."

LONDON, Feb. 3.

In commenting upon the present position in China, and upon the possibility of war between European powers arising out of it, the principal American newspapers write in a strongly sympathetic tone towards Great Britain.

The "New York Herald" declares that "blood is thicker than water," and that millions of "Anglo-Saxons" would find their commercial interests threatened if Great Britain engaged in war.

RUSSIA IN CHINA.

HIGH-HANDED ACTION.

LONDON, Feb. 3.

The Russian military adviser to the Chinese Government, Colonel Woronoff, has insisted that China shall dismiss the German officers who are acting as military instructors to Chinese troops.

FROZEN MEAT.

IMPORTANT CONFERENCE.

QUESTION OF SHIPPING FACILITIES.

LONDON, Feb. 3.

The conference between the Australasian Frozen Meat Committee and the shipowners and brokers was held yesterday.

Representatives of the majority of the financial, land, shipping, investment, and frozen meat companies interested in Australian trade, and also of the Australian banks, were present.

The questions of the inspection of ships carrying frozen meat and the insulation of the refrigerating machinery occupied most attention, and these were thoroughly discussed.

The ship-owners stated that they would not object to the inspection of the carrying space in their vessels, provided properly qualified and impartial surveyors were appointed.

A sub-committee, comprising Mr. E. T. Doxat (chairman and managing director of Dalgety and Company Limited), Mr. E. Montague Nelson (chairman and managing director of the Colonial Consignment and Distributing Company Limited), Mr. H. M. Paul (manager of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company Limited), and Mr. Henry Grant, of Messrs. Dangar, Grant, and Co., was appointed to embody the views of the conference in a permanent form.

THE AMERICAN BLIZZARD

THIRTY-SIX LIVES LOST.

MUCH DAMAGE DONE.

200 HORSES KILLED.

LONDON, Feb. 3.

The severe blizzard which has passed over the eastern portion of the United States caused a number of shipping casualties on the coast of New England, and 36 persons in all were drowned.

The storm was particularly severe in and around Boston, in which city damage was done to the extent of over a million dollars. Many fires occurred during the storm, the usual measures for checking them having been inoperative through the wreckage of the fire alarm system.

A great quantity of the overhead wires in connection with the electric car system in the city were blown down, and no fewer than 200 horses were killed by the falling posts and wires.

A LIGHTHOUSE BURNT.

THREE KEEPERS KILLED.

LONDON, Feb. 3.

The Crosby lighthouse, at Liverpool, has been burnt down. The fire was caused by a gale having smashed the lanterns, from which the burning oil descended.

Three of the lighthouse-keeping staff lost their lives.

GENERAL CABLE NEWS.

LONDON, Feb. 2.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has made a grant of £1,000 to the clergy endowment fund of the Goulburn diocese, New South Wales, and one of £1,500 towards the endowment of a bishopric for North Australia.

Captain Sandford and Sergeants M'Namara and Fry, of the First Garrison Division New South Wales Artillery, have passed through the long course of instruction in gunnery at Shoeburyness. Captain Sandford passed with first-class honours, and Sergeants M'Namara and Fry obtained certificates.

James Corbett, the American boxer, who was defeated for the world's championship by Robert Fitzsimmons, of New Zealand, and who recently challenged his victor to another contest, has now announced his retirement from the ring.

A BOY DECAPITATED BY A TRAIN.

ASLEEP ON THE LINE.

STAWELL, Thursday.

A shocking accident occurred on the railway line close to the town early this morning. A party of about fifty young boys, belonging to the Stawell Juvenile Tent of Rechabites, proceeded yesterday afternoon to take part in a demonstration at Ararat, and returned to Stawell at an early hour this morning. One of the party, a boy named John Green, about 10 years of age, left his comrades, and proceeded towards his parents' residence, along the railway line. It is surmised that he was fatigued by his outing during the day, and seems to have gone to sleep on the line. The train which leaves Stawell for Ballarat at 6.20 a.m. passed over the little fellow as he lay asleep, the wheels completely severing the head from the body. An inquest will be held.

NEW INSOLVENTS.

Hector Hall Leplastrier, of Nepean-road, North Brighton, retired civil servant. Causes of insolvency—Having been retired from the public service, inadequate pension to maintain a large family, want of employment, and pressure of creditors. Liabilities, £32/18/3; assets, 5; deficiency, £52/13/3. Mr. E. H. Shackell, assignee.

Robert Steel Shalders, of 58 Market-street, accountant. Cause of insolvency—Pressure of creditors. Liabilities, £198/17; assets, £37; deficiency, £120/17/. Mr. Anderson, assignee.

Donald Charles Saunders, of Tungamah, ironmonger's assistant. Liabilities, £319/15/; assets, £5; deficiency, £314/15/. Mr. A. A. Manning, assignee. Filed at Tarrangower.

"CANARY" GOLD-BAR TOBACCO, "CANARY" GOLD-BAR TOBACCO, "CANARY" GOLD-BAR TOBACCO, "CANARY" GOLD-BAR TOBACCO, The Finest the World can Produce.—[Advt.]

FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

CONTROL OF THE MEDITERRANEAN.

STARTLING FRENCH PRONOUNCEMENT.

"A FRENCH GULF."

LONDON, Feb. 3.

Following upon the speech of M. Lockroy in the French Chamber of Deputies a couple of days ago, in which he declared that France must create a port opposite Gibraltar, from which a flotilla of torpedo-boats might prevent the entry of a British fleet into the Mediterranean, a startling statement has been made by a member of the French Government.

Admiral Besnard, the Minister of Marine, speaking in the Chamber of Deputies yesterday, said the French Government intended that the Mediterranean should remain a French gulf.

The Minister added that the Government intended to establish a strong system of coastal defence, and to build ships of war for service outside Europe.

INDIAN FRONTIER WAR.

GENERAL LOCKHART.

LONDON, Feb. 3.

It had been arranged that General Sir William Lockhart, commander of the forces in the Punjaub, who has been in charge of the Tirah expedition against the tribesmen, should return to England on furlough, and he had reached Calcutta on his way to London.

It is now announced, however, that he will remain in India for another month, and he returns to Peshawar.

THE SOUDAN CAMPAIGN.

DERVISHES RETREATING.

LONDON, Feb. 3.

The latest news from the Soudan is that the dervishes are evacuating Metemmeh and retiring to Omdurman.

TURKEY'S TROUBLES.

THE CRETAN GOVERNORSHIP.

THE CZAR'S ULTIMATUM.

LONDON, Feb. 3.

The Czar Nicholas of Russia and the Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey have been in communication regarding the proposed appointment of Prince George of Greece to the post of Governor of Crete.

In reply to the Sultan the Czar has now stated that he will withdraw from any further initiative in Constantinople if the Sultan persists in his opposition to Prince George's appointment.

A PROTEST FROM BULGARIA.

SUPPOSED POLITICAL MOVE.

LONDON, Feb. 3.

Bulgaria has made a strong protest to Turkey against the oppression of her subjects on the Macedonian frontier, and has demanded that the Porte should take steps to procure the cessation of the acts of oppression.

Bulgaria demands also that the officials who have been guilty of outrages at Uskub, where 33 persons were tortured, should be dismissed.

The "Standard" this morning, commenting upon the intelligence, says that it is evident Prince Ferdinand, in thus bringing pressure to bear on Turkey at the present juncture, sees an opportunity of supporting Russia.

GERMANY AND AMERICA.

A TARIFF WAR.

THE UNITED STATES INDIGNANT.

LONDON, Feb. 3.

The United States Senate is showing much indignation over the action of Germany in prohibiting the importation of American fruit.

The assigned cause of the prohibition is that it has been done on sanitary grounds, but the Senators declare that this is a mere pretext, and that the action has been taken in retaliation for the United States duty on German sugar.

GERMAN TRADE.

EXTENDING MARKETS.

LONDON, Feb. 3.

The question of encouraging trade is creating much interest in Germany.

A bill is at present under discussion in the Reichstag providing for the extension of Germany's markets in places outside Great Britain, the United States, and the British colonies.

The reason assigned for the necessity of taking action in the matter is the recent developments which have arisen in the commercial relations between Germany and Great Britain.

[Evidently what is referred to in the above message is the action recently taken by Great Britain upon the suggestion of Canada in determining the commercial treaties with Germany and Belgium, in order to allow Canada to impose discriminating duties in favour of British manufactures.]

LAW NOTICES (This Day).

SUPREME COURT.
Full Court.
(Before the Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Williams, and Mr. Justice Hodges.)
At Half-past 10 a.m. — In the matter of James (an insolvent, part heard), Stanley v. Victorian Railway Commissioners.
Second Civil Court.
(Before Mr. Justice Holroyd.)
At Half-past 10 a.m.—Graham v. Clinchy (part heard), Sparks v. Gardiner, Davidson v. Vanderbilt.
Practice Court.
Mr. Justice A'Beckett will take chamber business at half-past 10 a.m.
INSOLVENCY COURT.
(Before Judge Molesworth.)
At Half-past 10 a.m.—Bankruptcy motion, C. P. Schlesinger.
At Half-past 10 a.m.—Certificate Applications—C. Davey, R. Byrne, J. F. O'Connor, R. D. Breen, R. E. Lahy, W. H. O'Meara, M. R. Seyffarth.
At Half-past 10 a.m. — Motion to court, D. Gamley.
(Before Judge Molesworth and two Police Magistrates).
Usual fortnightly Licensing Court.
Criminal Court.
(Before Judge Casey.)
Melbourne Criminal Sessions.—Calendar for February.
COUNTY COURT.
(Before Judge Gaunt.)
Judgment Summonses.—Under £20 List.
At Half-past 10 a.m. — Ryan v. Ward, Batchelor v. Jordan, Shillinglaw v. Mason, Moss v. Dagg.

LOVERS OF GOOD THINGS Prefer Milo Cigarettes.—[Advt.]

ROBUR TEA. Government Analyist, Tasmania, says:—"THE FLAVOUR AND AROMA OF THESE TEAS ARE EXCELLENT. —[Advt.]

THE GREAT HEAT.

DEVASTATING FIRES.

ALARMING POSITION IN SOUTH GIPPSLAND

SEVERE LOSSES.

HEROISM AND SUFFERING.

MR. BARACCHI'S FORECAST.

TO-DAY POSSIBLY "