

China, 666 miles away. The second squadron will spend six days at that port, leaving on November 4, and arriving again at Manila on November 7.

#### Sydney's Entertainment Fund.

At a meeting of the Citizens' Reception Committee, the Lord Mayor warmly condemned the parsimony of citizens in subscribing to the entertainment for the American Fleet.

### COMMONWEALTH.

The sugar yield of Queensland last year was 188,307 tons, which establishes a record.

The Federal Parliament next session deals with the question of reciprocity with Canada.

The export of Victorian rabbits for the last six months decreased by two million, and the value by £50,000.

The Marine Court has suspended the certificate of Captain Dunsford, of the steamer Westralia, for 12 months.

The Full Court has confirmed the amalgamation of the Mutual Life and Citizens' Life Assurance Companies.

Ex-employees of the Lithgow ironworks claim that they have been locked out, and have applied for the appointment of a Wages Board.

Messrs. Burns, Philp and Co.'s tenders for Pacific Island mail services, ranging from three to seven years, have been accepted.

The South Australian Government supports the Victorian Government in prohibiting the import of South African fodder.

The steamer Hornsby Grange, which went ashore on Monday last while on a voyage to Vladivostok, has been floated off undamaged.

Sydney Underwriters have received a cable stating that £69,000 worth of sound cargo has been salvaged from the wreck of the Star of Japan.

Owing to a falling off in the Eastern trade the China Navigation Company is withdrawing two out of four steamers trading to Australia.

The Earl of Dudley will be sworn in as Governor-General of the Commonwealth at Sydney on September 8, and will afterwards proceed to Melbourne.

The Minister for Agriculture has agreed that South African fodder may be chaffed and re-exported to India and elsewhere without being removed from Bond.

Condon, a well-known footballer, walked into a hairdresser's shop at Darlington on July 6, picked up a razor, walked into the street, and cut his throat, dying shortly afterwards.

McDonald, a station-owner at Turkey Creek, was shot dead by a native named Major, who, well armed and accompanied by three companions, threatens vengeance upon other natives.

The Federal Government is considering a scheme propounded by an American visitor for the establishment of a Press News Association to spread Australian news throughout the world and publish a weekly journal.

Since the Industrial Disputes Act came into force only five labour unions in New South Wales unions have registered. This poor response is attributed to the Labour Council advising the unionists to ignore the Act.

The Premier of N.S.W. has arranged assisted passages for the first batch of Scots fishermen, who are coming out to work the fisheries off the coast. Further assistance will be given on their arrival to start the fishing industry.

The Lithgow ironworks were closed down on July 3rd, throwing some 500 men out of employment. The closing is the outcome of the ballot of employees by a large majority deciding against the proposed reductions in wages.

The Anti-Sweating League in Melbourne claims that since 1896 the increase of wages under the Wages Boards has been a million and a half, and that sweating has practically been abolished in trades over which the Boards are operative.

The Minister for Agriculture, Hon. G. Swinburne, referring to the heavy falling off in the export of agricultural products, said no doubt the time was rapidly arriving when a policy which would break up big estates for agricultural purposes must be adopted.

Mr. Deakin, in reply to the Labour party's inquiry, said the Government was

still pledged to give effect to the new protection. Amongst the means it was likely to adopt was a referendum with a view to giving the Federation wider powers of an industrial character.

At the annual meeting of the Pastoralists' Union, Mr. Wm. Edward Abbot, ex-M.L.A., in his presidential address, stated that more than two million sterling worth of stock was lost in the Riverina and Victoria during the last three months owing to the drought.

The scow Maroro, 28 days out from Raglan to Sydney, arrived off Port Stephens on Saturday morning short of provisions. She secured supplies from light-house, and reported that she had signalled several vessels that she was short of supplies, but in each case the signals were either not noticed or were disregarded.

The Government of New South Wales has appointed a dozen new members of the Legislative Council, including Colonel Burns (of Burns, Philp, Limited), Mr. Henry Gullett (ex-editor of the "Sydney Daily Telegraph"), Alderman Thomas Hughes (Lord Mayor of Sydney), and Mr. B. B. O'Connor (ex-Minister for Public Instruction).

A meeting of leading theatrical managers, including representatives of Messrs. Williamson, Flemming, Geach, Meynell and Gunn, Willoughby and Ward, and West's Pictures, was held in Sydney to protest against the Christchurch Council's recent by-law on the management of theatres. A resolution was carried that the action was arbitrary in the extreme.

#### Mrs. Besant on India.

Mrs. Annie Besant, the well-known Theosophist leader, lecturing in Sydney, last week, on India, said that if England wished to keep India under a despotism she was mad to train India on English constitutional lines. Terrible unrest was the outgrowth of this policy. The heir to the throne should rule India. If England met the present difficulty with sympathy Indians would accept overtures joyfully.

#### Verdict of Manslaughter.

The jury in the Braybrook disaster declared that the collision was caused by the culpable negligence of Milburn and Dolman, the drivers of the two Bendigo engines, and Stationmaster Kendal, and found them guilty of manslaughter.

The three were committed to stand their trial on this charge. Bail was allowed in £50 each, and one surety of £50.

#### Labour Conference.

The Commonwealth Labour Conference, after discussing the rejection of a number of proposals tending to bring the policy more into line with Continental Socialism, re-affirmed its objective, which provides for the cultivation of an Australian sentiment based upon the maintenance of national purity and the development in Australia of an enlightened self-reliant community, the securing of the full results of their industry to the producers by collective ownership of monopolies, and the extension of the economic functions of the State and municipalities.

Speaking at a subsequent banquet, Mr. Fisher, Leader of the Labour party in the Federal House of Representatives, said it had been said that some Labour advocates were likely, by going too far, to endanger the movement, but they had to remember that a few years ago the policy of the Labour party, now accepted by Conservatives, was regarded as too advanced. He believed that in the future every party would claim the policy which the Labour party was now putting forward.

Mr. J. C. Watson, ex-Federal Premier and former Leader of the Labour party, said the object of the party should not be to gain immediate results, but rather to hold out to the community of the depressed some beacon for the future regarding the possibility of improving their own condition and the condition of their children. They could not at present fasten the whole of their attention upon the millennium.

He intimated that though severing his connection with politics, for the present at any rate, his connection with the Labour party would continue as long as he was of any use to it.

Mr. Fisher, Leader of the Labour party, presided at the Commonwealth Labour Conference on July 7. It was decided, after a long debate, that a graduated land tax on unimproved value be imposed on estates over £5000 in value.

After a vigorous discussion on the eighth plank of the existing platform dealing with military protection it is understood that the delegates agreed to the establishment of a system of compulsory military training for all males between certain ages, and also favoured the establishment of a purely Australian navy for coastal defence, the money for the purpose to be raised by direct taxation.

The establishment of a Commonwealth Bank was made a plank of the fighting platform, and the initiation of a Commonwealth general insurance was made a plank of the general platform.

#### Fall in Price of Flour.

The Millers' Association has reduced the price of flour to £9 5/.

Leading commercial men, in giving evidence before the Wheat Commission, denied the existence of a wheat ring in New South Wales.

#### Decrease of Crime.

The report of the Comptroller of Prisons shows that the number of prisoners dealt with last year in New South Wales was 398 less than the previous year.

The average prison population of Victoria last year was 914, against 1007 during the previous year. In 16 years the proportion of prisoners to the general population has fallen from one in 613 to one in 1376.

#### "No Rent" in Norfolk Island.

The Governor of New South Wales, in reply to Mr. Quintal, representative of the Norfolk Islanders, who came to urge the claims of the evicted islanders, produced an Order in Council dated 1856, showing that when the islanders were first shipped from Pitcairn to Norfolk Island they were allotted land and houses by Lieutenant Gregorie. As soon as the news reached England an Order-in-Council was issued disowning Lieutenant Gregorie's action, and making the islanders tenants of the Crown.

Sir Harry Rawson assured Mr. Quintal that he was doing his very best for the islanders. The Government maintained its right to the lands, but the householders would only have to sign a license form, and they were assured of their houses free of rent till the third generation. After that they might have to pay a nominal rent.

#### Penny Cables Impracticable.

The chief Commonwealth Electrical Engineer considers that it would require an enormous acceleration of speed to bring the cable rate within the possibilities of the penny a word suggested by Mr. Henniker Heaton. In the present state of our knowledge higher speed on long distance cables than at present obtains does not appear possible. It must be considered, however, that telegrams without wires were looked upon as a dream but a short while ago.

#### Tasmanian Politics.

The Premier, the Hon. J. W. Evans, in a policy speech, said that the time had come for all the States to make a stand against Federal encroachment. He fore-shadowed an unimproved land tax, and the placing of the railways under one commissioner. Local option would be the first measure dealt with. He made no threats against the Upper House, but if the hopes of passing legislation were unfulfilled Ministers would have to seriously consider the position.

### THE OLD COUNTRY.

The Royal Welsh male choir of 20 voices is sailing for Australia, where a series of concerts will be given.

His Majesty the King, accompanied by Queen Alexandra, last week opened the Royal Edward Dock at Bristol.

Imports for June show a decrease of £1,069,000, exports of £4,158,000, and re-exports of £1,060,000, compared with the previous June.

Mr. Asquith has declined to facilitate the passing of the Daylight Saving Bill on which the Select Committee presented a favourable report.

A new University building was opened by their Majesties the King and Queen at Leeds on July 7, 80,000 school children witnessing the ceremony.

Three deaths and 100 cases of plomains. Replying to congratulations on the occasion of his birthday, Mr. Chamberlain declared that the victory of tariff reform was certain, and was coming very soon.

The Government has arranged for the Daylight Saving Bill to be examined by the Board of Trade in consultation with representatives of trade, labour, and transport interests.

The Congregational Congress declined the Australian invitation to hold the next Congress there, owing to the impracticability of securing adequate representation at so great a distance.

Madame Anna Gould and the Prince de Sagan were married in London on July 7. The civil marriage was performed at the Strand Registry Office, and the religious ceremony at a French Protestant Church in Soho.

In response to the appeal of Lord Desborough, President of the Olympic Games Committee, through the "Daily Mail," the public in a week subscribed £12,000 to entertain the competitors at the Olympic games. The Government are also banqueting the athletes.

In the House of Commons, Mr. John Burns, President of the Local Government Board, was warmly cheered on returning to the House after recovering from the strain which he received last month in assisting in releasing two men who were caught between colliding motor cars.

Lord St. Aldwyn, formerly Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, and Colonial Secretary from 1878-80, in unveiling at the Colonial Office a memorial bust of the late Sir Robert Herbert (Permanent Under-Secretary for the Colonies from 1871 to 1892), paid a high tribute to his personal and administrative qualities.

The report of the Union Bank recommends a dividend of 10 per cent and a bonus of 2½ per cent, that £10,000 be placed to the credit of the colonial premises' account, and that £18,000 be absorbed in a bonus of 10 per cent on the salaries of the staff, that £30,000 be carried to the reserve and £36,000 carried forward.

#### Tobacco Culture.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Lloyd-George) has agreed to place £6000 a year at the disposal of the Irish Agricultural Department for the encouragement of the tobacco industry in Ireland, instead of the rebate at present allowed.

Mr. Lloyd-George agreed to extend the same concession to England, Wales, and Scotland if similar conditions were shown to exist.

#### Labour on Its Dignity.

The Labour party, considering Mr. Keir Hardie's omission from the Royal garden party at Windsor as an attempt by the Court to interfere with the freedom of debate in the House of Commons, and associating itself with his action regarding the recent visit of the King to the Czar, requests the Lord Chamberlain to omit the Labour party from similar functions until Mr. Keir Hardie's name is restored.

#### Army Reductions.

The "Daily Telegraph" asserts that a section of the Cabinet, including Mr. Lloyd-George and Mr. Winston Churchill, contemplate further reducing the army by 30,000 men, reducing the Household Cavalry to one regiment, and also reducing the Royal Garrison Artillery and Royal Engineers.

The "Telegraph" appeals to Mr. Asquith to support Mr. Haldane in resisting proposals calculated to bring into grave peril the safety and honour of the country.

#### The Australian Navy.

In the House of Commons, Mr. McKenna (First Lord of the Admiralty), in reply to Mr. William Redmond (brother of the Nationalist leader), said that the Commonwealth naval scheme would require much amplification before it could be fully considered from the standpoint of its possible adoption as an alternative for the present naval agreement.

#### Aerial Navies.

Major B. Baden-Powell, who has made aviation his special study, and who invented man-lifting kites, declares that national safety requires the immediate allocation of £100,000 for aerial research and the construction of aerial warships.