

## VICTORIA.

While assisting in the removal of a tree from the Yarrowonga football ground on 14th inst., William Lowe, a young man, fell from a height of 20ft. and received a bad shaking.

The motion in the House of Representatives for leave to introduce the No-preference Bill was carried by the Speaker's casting vote, and the first reading agreed to by a similar majority.

There was much disorder in the House of Representatives, when the Government succeeded in closing the introductory debate on the first test bill. Messrs. Webster and Watkins were out of the House, and the closure was carried in their absence, amid great uproar.

Senator Millen denies the suggestion that the Government was awaiting the decision of the new Governor-General as to whether they would be permitted to go to the country. The Government, he said, had not approached the Governor-General on the subject.

Another valuable site in the heart of Melbourne has changed hands. The block of city offices located in the three-story building, numbered 43 to 51 Queen-street, and the site thereof have been sold by Messrs. John Buchan and Co. for £38,000. The site has a frontage of 81ft. 2½in. and a depth of 89ft. 3in. to a right of way. On a frontage basis the price paid per foot is, roughly, £460.

"The Draft Bill affecting the Murray waters has been completed," says the Minister for External Affairs (Mr. Glynn), "and we are only waiting for a few formal alterations to be effected before a clean proof will be available. When this is obtainable the bill will be submitted to the Prime Minister and the State Premiers concerned for, I hope, favourable consideration and agreement."

The border railway between Finlay and Tocumwal has been opened for traffic, although construction work is still proceeding. This line will supply a new route between Sydney and Melbourne when officially opened. The present service between Tocumwal and Finlay is a daily one, a train being despatched from Tocumwal at 7.20 a.m. to arrive at Finlay at 8 a.m. It returns to connect with the afternoon train to Melbourne.

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**AFTERNOON TRAIN TO MELBOURNE.**

Senator Millen, replying to Senator Rae in the Senate, stated that since January 14 511 rifle stocks and 477 fore-ends had been scrapped and sown up and burned at the Lithgow Smallarms Factory. The stocks cost  $4/8\frac{1}{2}$  each in the rough, and the fore-ends  $3/2$ . They were experimenting with Australian timbers, but it was still found necessary to import a certain quantity. The reason that there were rejects was that defects developed in the wood in the process of manufacture.

Interesting evidence on the subject of the duty on boots and leather was given before the inter-State Commission. Mr. Alfred Lee (Messrs. Enoch Taylor and Co.) said that if higher duties were put on, labour could not be obtained to manufacture sufficient boots locally. He suggested that all boots made in Australia should be branded. That course would overcome any prejudice against Australian boots. Mr. J. D. Alderson said the reason higher duties were sought was that imports were increasing alarmingly.

Albert Jenkins was charged at Benalla Court with obtaining from Frederick Green, licensee of Royal Hotel, £4/16/ by means of a valueless cheque. Accused on 13th April stopped a night at the hotel, and next morning gave a cheque for 5 guineas in payment. It was signed by a fictitious name. He was arrested in Elizabeth-street by Detective Pigott on 6th inst., and he tried to escape, but stopped running on the detective threatening to fire. The bench inflicted a fine of £15, in default, four months' imprisonment.

Moving the second reading of the Preference Prohibition Bill, Mr. Irvine said the bill was intended to crush the

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"spoils to the victors" policy. It was time, he said, that the hypocrisy of this "other things being equal" cry was exposed and abandoned. "If you want to test the sincerity of the Government," Mr. Irvine declared, "pass this bill and reject it the first time it goes to the Senate." Mr. Fisher replied that they might as well go back to barbarism as pass this bill. The bill was introduced to create a deadlock.

A fatal motor accident occurred at Terang, Mr. Eliot S. Shannon, of Geelong, being killed. Mr. Shannon and his wife were travelling from Terang to Warrnam-

were travelling from Terang to Warrnambool, and when going down the hill a mile from Terang the steering gear broke. The car left the road and crashed through a fence, striking a stone culvert. It overturned, with Mr. Shannon underneath. He was killed outright. His wife was thrown clear and received a severe shaking. Mr. Shannon was a member of a Geelong firm of shipping and stock merchants. He was only recently married.

The Melbourne railway headquarters have been informed that an attempt was made to wreck the Melbourne to Sale express near Sale. A piece of hardwood, 6ft. long, 6in. wide and 3in. thick, was ripped out of a cattle guard pit at Holy Plain and laid across the rails just beyond a crossing. The engine dragged the obstruction 16 yards before it shattered it. The driver stopped the train and an examination showed the track had been badly torn and the rails dented. The train was crowded at the time and had the engine left the track nothing could have averted a terrible disaster.

Designs for the Parliamentary buildings at Canberra are being invited by the Federal Government. The competition is to be open to the world, and an international board, with an Australian architect as chairman, is to be appointed to make the awards. It is intended that the board shall meet for this purpose in London early next year. The Government is desirous that there shall be unanimity in the selection of the Australian representative, and with this object in view representatives of the various institutes of architects have been invited to meet in Melbourne on 1st June.

While the steamer Indarra, which had on board two prisoners, Norman Mahoney and Gerald Downey, escapees who were recently arrested in W.A., was between Schnapper Point and Mount Martha, in Port Phillip, one of them asked Constable Arnell to take him out of the cabin. Mahoney then suddenly rushed out of the cabin and up the stairway on to the vessel's stern, where he seized a lifebuoy and jumped overboard. The steamer cruised around for some time, but found no trace of the missing man. It is believed that he was eaten by sharks, which at present are plentiful in the bay.

At the annual conference of the Federated Mining Employees' Association, Mr. W.

At the annual conference of the Federated Mining Employees' Association, Mr. W. G. Spence attended and explained the benefits that would accrue as the result of an amalgamation with the A.W.U. At present the A.W.U. had a membership of 61,000. A conference was about to be held with the Meat Industry Employees' Union on the same question, and an amalgamation would probably result which would make 12,000 additional members. If the Federated Mining Employees' Union agreed to join there would be a membership of nearly 100,000. Consideration of the matter was deferred.

At a meeting of the Board of Public Health, it was decided to ask all the State Boards of Health to co-operate in requesting the Federal Government to vote £50,000 as the basis of a fund for cancer research in Australia, conditional on another £50,000 being subscribed by the public. The mover of the resolution was Mr. F. G. Wood, who drew attention to the possible existence of cancer-infected houses in Melbourne. Dr. Robertson, chairman of the board, said that Federal research was required, as cancer was not confined to Victoria, but was prevalent throughout the Commonwealth. It was a matter that should be very fittingly taken up by the Federal Government.

Fred Niblo, the well-known comedian, accompanied by Mrs. Niblo, left Sydney by motor, in order to get a closer view of Australian scenes and back country than he had hitherto been able to obtain from a railway carriage window. When he arrived at Menzies' Hotel, Melbourne, after a journey of five days, Mr. Niblo declared that while he would not have missed the experience for a thousand dollars, he would not repeat it for more than that amount of money. "We travelled some of the worst roads in the world," said Mr. Niblo, "and as I have motored in many countries I think I can express an opinion on the subject. I feel sorry for the people on that route," Mr. Niblo added, "and how they

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get their stuff to market in some of those parts is a mystery, unless they have solved the problem of transport by aeroplane."

The Victorian Premier conferred with the New South Wales Premier regarding the failure of the Sydney health authorities to carry out undertakings given to the Commonwealth and the other States when quarantine was lifted last year. Mr

when quarantine was lifted last year. Mr Holman blamed the Commonwealth Government. The position taken up by the Commonwealth in refusing to continue the full use of the quarantine station had been mainly responsible for the State being compelled to break its promise made in November last; but the Sydney health authorities were prepared to act effectively as soon as the Commonwealth gave favorable consideration to their requirements.

In a brief statement in the House of Representatives the Minister for External Affairs gave some details of the proceedings which had taken place in Papua with regard to the irregular recruiting of natives, similar to those which have been already published. He said it was exceedingly difficult to ascertain the exact number of natives who had been affected, but he believed about 40 had been improperly taken from their homes, and of these all but three or four had been returned. He assured the House that every care would be taken to make the fullest inquiry on the least suspicion of improper recruiting. Mr. Fisher: Will you lay all the papers on the table? The Minister for External Affairs: Not just yet.

The Wangaratta coroner (Mr. J. W. Beaven) and a jury of twelve held an inquiry on the body of Miss Edith Garnett, who was killed on the level crossing on 8th April by the Bright train. Evidence was given by twelve witnesses, and went to show that deceased, who resided about 30 yards from the railway line, had recently said that she was so used to the whistling of passing trains that she took no notice. On the day of the fatality she was seen walking slowly towards the crossing holding an open umbrella in one hand and a letter, which she was reading, in the other. The whistle was blowing loudly. When the train was only a few yards from her she looked up and hesitated. The next instant she was run down. The jury, without leaving the box, returned a verdict of death accidentally caused.

A bureau of general knowledge is not usually to be found in a list of Government offices; but such a bureau has recently been established by the Commonwealth Government in London, under the title of "the Australian Intelligence Department." Its main duties consist in supplying Australian



**Australian Intelligence Department.**—Its main duties consist in supplying Australian information of every description to those interested in any way in the Commonwealth. Movements of public interest in Australia are noted. Copies of official reports are kept, and closely examined, as any one publication frequently touches upon divers subjects. In addition the latest cables, articles, press notices and Ministers' statements on leading questions are available, and with the aid of an elaborate system of indexing, the latest information from all sources on any given subject is thus collated and rendered easily accessible to inquirers, and a record of all questions answered is kept. The inquiries cover a wide range.

In accordance with the provisions of the Workers Compensation Act, the State Ministry is proceeding to establish in Melbourne a State insurance office. Mr. A. M. Laughton, the Victorian Government Statist, as the officer who collected the main part of the information required for the drafting of the measure, recently visited New Zealand in order to report on the working of the State insurance system. Mr. Laughton conferred with the Chief Secretary at some length, and explained the New Zealand system. Mr. Murray stated subsequently that Mr. Laughton had collected a great deal of valuable information for the guidance of the Ministry. He (the Minister) proposed to bring the subject before Cabinet at its next meeting, in order that the insurance office might be established without delay. On giving consideration to the report, the Ministry will decide on the appointment of a commissioner and staff for controlling the work of the insurance office. Mr. Laughton is mentioned as likely to receive the appointment. Mr. Murray does not consider that the act will be in operation before the end of the financial year.

Hitherto considered to be the pest of Western Australia, the *Kingia* tree is now for the first time being considered as a source of very valuable possibilities in connection with the manufacture of paper and pulp goods. At the office of Mr. J. Nathan, Melbourne, several articles manufactured from the despised tree have been exhibited. At present the outside pulp of the tree has not been used, but it is now being tested by the Australian Paper Mills, and it is believed that it will make good paper. When the bark is stripped a peculiar cane-like surface of fibre is laid

good paper. When the bark is stripped a peculiar cane-like surface of fibre is laid bare, and inside this again is a harder core. This had formerly been looked on as waste. A recent invention has now led to its being pulped. The resultant material is of tough and almost indiarubbery quality, and can be hammered or pressed into varying shapes. A stout trunk was shown made from the material. It was exceedingly light, but easily bore the weight of a man jumping upon it. A boot heel and a roller skate wheel were also exhibited, hammered into shape from the compressed pulp, and it is stated that the material, which is as light as cork, can be used as a backing for linoleum, where its cheapness will be of advantage. From the cane material, before pulping, brooms have been manufactured, and have been found to be far more durable than brushes made of bass. The cane can also be used for basket work, and it is possible that this fibre of the *Kingia* tree may in the future be largely used in preference to bass, owing to its hard wearing qualities.

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