

Lowermost State of the Australian Federation

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HOBART, Tasmania, March 28.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I write this in the lowermost city of the lowermost state of the new Australian federation and in one of the lowermost towns of the globe. Hobart is 2,500 miles south of the equator, on the edge of the Southern ocean, that mighty sea which flows between the Pacific and the Antarctic. It is now late in the fall, but the grass is as green as old Ireland in June, and, although Mount Wellington, back of the city, has a coating of snow, the sheep are everywhere feeding outdoors and the sun is as warm as Ohio in May.

As I look about me I cannot realize that this is Tasmania, the country I studied about years ago as Van Dieman's Land. I knew it was an island floating about somewhere between the south pole and Australia. I had an idea that it was bleak, bare and inhospitable and supposed it about the jumping off place of creation. I had read of its criminals sent out from England who were about as cruelly treated as are those of China today and it hardly seemed that the trip here would be worth the time and expense.

I have changed my opinion. Tasmania is the Switzerland of the southern Pacific and it is really one of the most healthful and beautiful lands of the globe. It is a heart-shaped island, with its top toward Australia and its tail toward the pole. It is all mountains, valleys and glens, covering an area three times as great as Massachusetts, almost as great as Ireland and about the size of West Virginia. It is populated by 200,000 English-speaking people and the tourist agencies have turned it into a great health resort. The whole country is spotted with boarding houses and hotels and from December until May, which are the summer months here, it is swarming with tourists. You can go almost anywhere by coach, horseback or on rail, and there is lots of good company. There are waterfalls and lakes, forests of fern trees, brooks noted for fishing, hunting parks and everything that the sportsman desires. There are guide books, following which you can go on foot over the country, and, indeed, the land is a little Norway or Switzerland away down here below the equator.

The Tasmanian Capital.

Hobart is the Tasmanian capital. The colony still has a governor, although it has already elected its members of the federal Parliament and from now on will belong to the great colonial empire of Australia. It will, however, maintain its state government, much as our states do theirs, and its Parliament will continue to meet in the government house here.

Hobart is the largest city on the island. It contains about 40,000 people and it is as nice a town of that size as you will find anywhere. It lies on a fine harbor in a nest of hills on the banks of the river Der-

tered with advertisements. I rode on the roof right under a great steel bow, which, pressing against the electric wire, takes the place of our trolley. The electrical machine is under the bed of the car in a box made for that purpose. I kept time and found that the only speed we made was going down hill. The motion was a succession of jerks, as though the electricity was spitting out its force in spasmodic fits. The fare is 6 cents a trip.

Tasmanian Newspapers.

Tasmania has its daily newspapers. There are several published in Hobart and also in Launceston, the chief town on the north side of the island. Bulletins with the headlines of the news are put out daily in front of the offices and the reporters come around and interview you much as they do in America.

There are good book stores, a fair number of business buildings and a lot of government offices. Indeed, all these southern cities run to government offices, spending a great deal on such structures. At Hobart they are of a fine yellow sandstone and are fairly well built. The most of the residences are of brick and stone, with gardens about them, and the stores are not unlike those of a town of the same size in the United States.

The names on the stores are queer ones. I am told that many of them have been adopted within the last few generations and that the names of the oldest inhabitants have been changed from those under which the founders of the family were sent out as penal convicts.

It was right near here that the chief penal colony was. Its name was Port Arthur and you can reach it by a short boat ride down the river. Some of the buildings in which the convicts were confined are still standing, and one can get a guide there who will describe the terrible tortures they underwent. They were so punished that many committed suicide. They were flogged, tortured with dripping water and loaded with heavy chains. They were kept in dark cellars, were used to pull the cars on the convict railway and were subject to all sorts of inhuman treatment. Today there are many good families in Tasmania who are the descendants of these convicts. Some of them will acknowledge it, but if you ask them the crime for which their ancestors were transported they will invariably reply that it was stealing a loaf of bread. Indeed, it would take a good-sized bakehouse running steadily to supply the many loaves which are said to have been stolen by these early Tasmanians.

Rather a Pious Country.

The Tasmania of today is rather pious than otherwise. The great majority of the people are either honest immigrants or the descendants of such immigrants from England, Ireland and Scotland or Australia. Transportation ceased in 1853, and since then the bulk of the people have com-

seem. They are lax in their enforcement of the laws and a crime that would imprison a man in England is often winked at here. If you think they are angels you had best leave your money at home."

I would say that this parson is a dyspeptic, that my money is still safe and that I do not believe him.

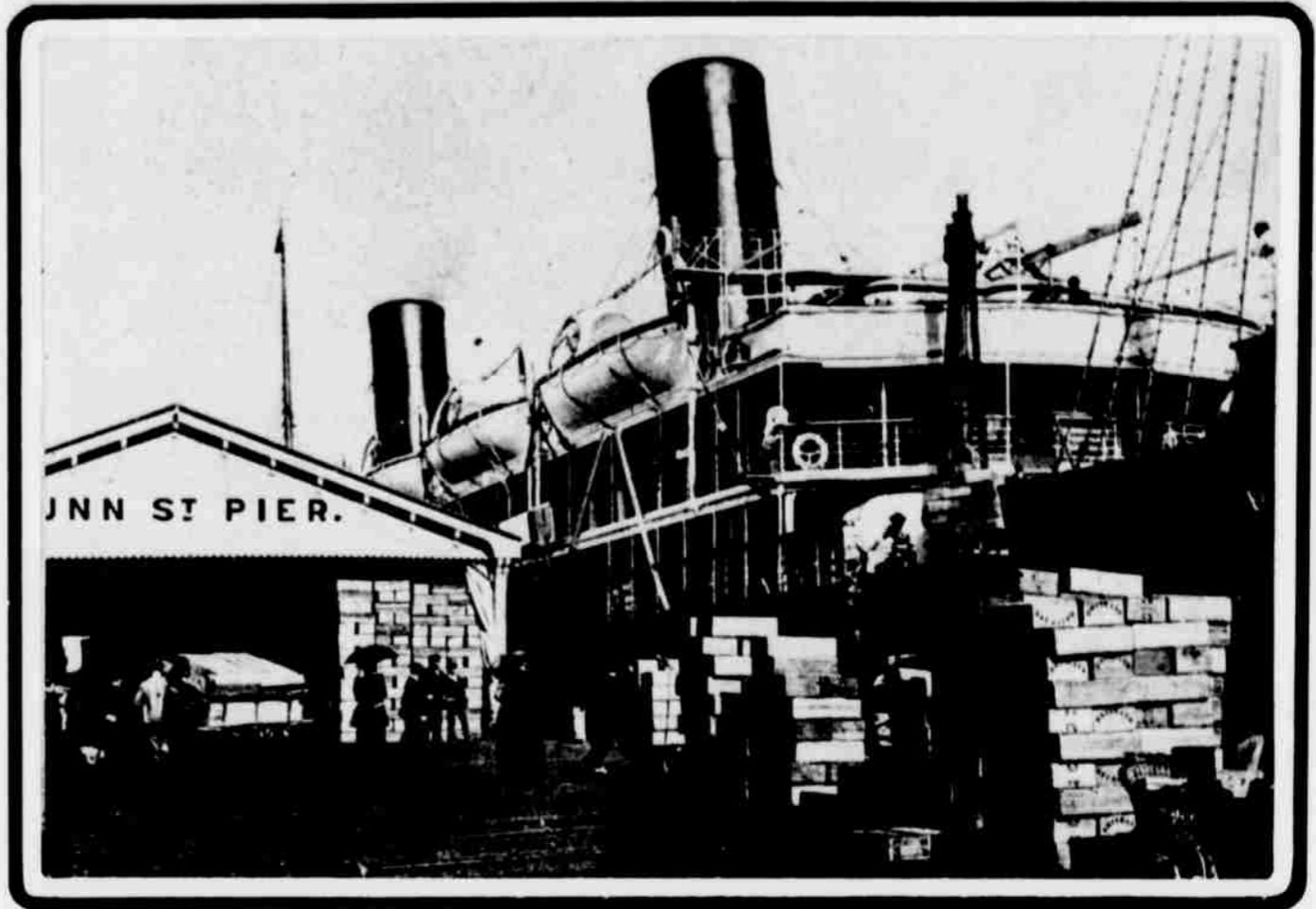
Since then I have made inquiries and learn that Tasmania has Episcopalian, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist churches. Nearly all the people go to church, and there are 5,000 Sunday school scholars in one denomination alone. The Roman Catholics have 4,000 boys and girls in their Sunday schools, the

or the United States, and the best of books can be had almost as quickly here as at home. The postal service, both foreign and local, is excellent. Books are sent from England to Tasmania at the rate of two ounces for a cent. There are mails about once a week, several of the largest steamship lines calling at Hobart. Newspapers printed in Tasmania can be sent to any part of the island free of postage, and you can send them to any part of Australia or New Zealand at the rate of ten ounces for a cent. I do not know of any government which gives such advantages to its newspapers.

Connected with the Postoffice department

large sum deposited in private savings banks. The general banking system is done by four institutions, the heads of which are in Hobart and Launceston, with branches covering the whole country. The banks are fairly good. They pay interest upon deposits at the rate of 1 1/2 per cent for six months, or 3 per cent for twelve months. The money is in pounds, shillings and pence and all accounts are kept in the English way. Some notes are issued, but there is considerable gold and silver in circulation.

Raising Apples for England.
 I should think our fruit farmers might



LOADING APPLES FOR ENGLAND AT HOBART, TASMANIA.

Presbyterians about 2,000 and the Methodists 6,000. It is discreditable here not to go to church or Sunday school, and the average workingman has his own pew.

Schools, Libraries and Museums.

The Tasmanians are not backward in educational matters. I have not written of the schools of New Zealand, but I would say that there and in Tasmania you can have about as good tuition as in the United States. In both countries education is compulsory. Here the man who does not send his children to school can be fined \$10 per child, and he will be fined again and again until he does send them. The schools are supported by the state. The chief secretary is the minister for

are postal savings banks, which pay 3 per cent interest on all deposits up to \$750. Wherever you find a money order office you find one of these banks, and it is remarkable what an influence they have on the thrift of the people. A large proportion of the inhabitants are depositors, almost \$500,000 being annually received in this way at Hobart alone. There are now 26,000 savings accounts in the two towns of Hobart and Launceston, and this in addition to a

get points from Tasmania as to how to work the European markets. This is more than a month by sea from London, but shiploads of apples are sent there every year. They are packed up in boxes and put in cold storage on the great steamers, not to be taken out until they reach London. The steamers are especially fitted up for the purpose and it has been found that they can successfully carry the apples this dis-

(Continued on Eighth Page.)

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"THEIR STREET CARS ARE IMMENSE AFFAIRS."

vent, backed by a mountain, the rocks of which look like the pipes of an organ. The town is laid out as a square and its wide streets cross one another at right angles, but it runs up hill and down and takes a ump here and there out into the country.

I went from one end of the capital to the other one day on the street car line. This is run by electricity and the people pride themselves on having established the first electric railroad system in their latitude. I wish I could show you the cars. There is nothing like them in the United States.

They were made in England and they look as though they had been pounded out by a crossroads blacksmith. They are enormous double-deckers, their sides plas-

ed of their own accord. There are today as many churches in Tasmania to the population as in any English colony, and the proportion of crime is no greater than in any other. The total number of prisoners before the criminal courts in 1898 was just about 4,000, the most of whom were arrested for fraud.

The public order is as good here as in New Zealand, and that is saying that it is excellent. I referred to the orderly condition of Hobart when in conversation with a parson who was passing through here the other day. He was an Englishman off for a tour, and he evidently had a poor opinion of the Tasmanians, for he said: "These people are not so good as they

education, and he has a corps of officers under him. The system of instruction is non-sectarian. There is a university in Hobart, and there are also three schools, called "ragged schools," supported by private subscriptions and government aid. Hobart has a well equipped museum and scientific institutions.

There are public libraries in many of the Tasmanian towns. The largest is that of the Launceston Institute, which has 20,000 volumes, and the next is the Hobart library, which has 18,000.

Another evidence of the intelligence of the people is seen in the excellent book stores which you find in the larger towns. The prices are quite as low as in England