The Colonist.

MONDAY, JANUARY 18, 1897.

BRITISH COLUMBIA IGNORED.

The Tariff Commission will not visit British Columbia. The reason given is that the time at its disposal is not long enough. To this it may be properly answered that the Commission ought to have laid out its programme better. Some of the largest business houses in Canada are in this Province, and the commerce of the Pacific is growing at a rate which bids fair soon to make the Western coast of the Dominion a close rival of its Atlantic seaboard in the race for commercial supremacy. In view of the fact that Mr. Tarte was kind enough to come out and discover British Columbia and Messrs. Blair and Davies were prompt to realize that "the hope of Canada lies in this direction," it seems somewhat remarkable that they have not been able to impress their colleagues in the Cabinet with the desirability, not to say necessity, of consulting the business men and farmers of this Province as to their views on the tariff. The development of mining in British Columbia bids fair, in the opinion of the visiting Ministers, to astonish the world and revolutionize the Western portion of the Dominion. Surely, then, it ought to have been worth while for the tariff commissioners to make a few enquiries here as to what changes, if any, our people would like to have made in the schedule of duties. The truth of the matter seems to be that Sir Richard Cartwright, who appears to be the real finance minister, has yet to give evidence of his appreciation of the fact that Canada reaches West of Lake Superior. To him the rest of the Dominion is a sort of excrescence on Ontario, and he has not yet been able to get out of his eyes the smoke of political battles fought anywhere between a quarter and half a century ago.

DR. DUNCAN'S CASE.

Any attempt to defend the dismissal of Dr. Duncan only serves to render its indefensibility more apparent. We are now told that no investigation was needed, because Dr. Duncan was condemned by his own confession. What was that "confession"? It was that he had done something which his professional knowledge told him was safe, which the result proved was safe, which any representative body of physicians will say was safe, and which was in accordance with a line of action declared by the Superintendent of Quarantine to be safe. According to the government's local apologist the wrong done by Dr. Duncan was not in letting the alleged suspect out to vote, for to say this would be to fly in the face of all the authorities, but in telling him to come back to quarantine. This excess of caution on the part of Dr. Duncan is held to show that he did wrong in following the recognized practice of the medical profession. Substantially Dr. Duncan is told that if he had disinfected the suspect and set him at large his conduct would not have been punished by dismissal, but that inasmuch as he told him to return so that he could be under medical supervision for a short time longer, he has made "a most distinct admission that there was danger in his being at large." The city council did not appear to think so; the medical profession does not appear to think so; and we venture to say that if the Department of Agriculture had asked Dr. Duncan for an explanation it would not think so. But even this is beside the real question at issue which is that the dismissal was for cause, and that the decapitated official was never notified that charges had been filed against him nor given an opportunity to be heard in his own defence. The government did not want any investigation. A section of their local support demanded the head of Dr. Duncan in a charger in recognition of their political services and they got it. What the public is most concerned with in this affair is that an officer of proved efficiency has been dismissed ostensibly for doing that which every medical practitioner in the country, with perhaps one or more interested exceptions, says was a proper thing to do, but really as a piece of small political spite.

A CALL TO ACTION.

In the history of every country there come periods which may be fitly described as epoch-making, and upon the policy which then inspires those who have the management of its affairs the future in a large measure depends. Such an hour has come to British Columbia, and popular appreciation of the fact is shown by the utterances of the press, the declarations of speakers at public meetings and the conversations heard on all sides. Knowledge of the vast resources of British Columbia is now general, faith in the results which will flow from their development is universal, and consequently enthusiasm as to the possibilities in store for the province, which not very long ago was indulged in only by the few, is now the characteristic of the many, irrespective of locality or political affiliations. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the demands for development projects are many, and that all eyes are directed to Victoria to see what the next session of the legislature will bring forth. It is not too much to say that the session may prove a pivotal one, both in a political and a provincial sense.

In so vast a province as British Columbia, where the people are scattered over so large an area and where there are several centres of business and population, it would be a matter of great surprise if a divergency of views did not exist as to the best line of action to be adopted, but while this adds to the difficulty of the situation it in no sense relieves either the government or the legislature of any responsibility in the premises. The multiplicity of the demands only emphasizes the necessity for the adoption of as vigorous, as broad and as comprehensive a policy as the resources at the command of the legislature will warrant.

It is not our purpose in this article to indicate any special line of policy which the government ought, in our opinion, to ask the legislature to endorse; but simply to lay stress upon the fact that the people expect action of some kind and are prepared to give their hearty support to any reasonable legislation which will stimulate the investment of capital in British Columbia, lead to the colonization of its vast vacant areas and add to the value of the property of those who have hitherto borne the burden of taxation and to whose enterprise, courage and business ability the present excellent condition of the province is largely due. We desire to impress upon the members of the legislature that they should come to the discharge of their sessional duties prepared to give effect to public sentiment along this line as fully as can be done without imperilling the credit of the province or placing upon the people excessive burdens. We wish to impress upon the members of the provincial administration the great importance of meeting the house with a well-defined line of policy. It may well be that in determining what that line shall be the expectations of some localities may be temporarily disappointed. This is, indeed, inevitable; for it would be beyond the ability of the province to meet at present all the demands likely to be made upon it on behalf of meritorious development projects; but the majority of the people are not unreasonable and will sustain the Government and the Legislature in any well-considered course, even if some of them might for personal or local reasons prefer some other.

We do not care to discuss the political aspect of this matter, for it is one that rises above political considerations. It matters little to the mass of the people whether John Doe or Richard Roe holds a cabinet portfolio, but it signifies much to every man who is interested in British Columbia to the extent of a dollar's worth of property or the chance of earning a fair day's pay for a fair day's work that the opportunity now presented to the Province shall not be allowed to pass unimproved. And so we plead for a session of the Legislature, whose results shall reflect the progressive spirit abroad among the people and give an impetus to the development of the whole Province.

THE BUBONIC PLAGUE.

Considerable uneasiness is felt in some parts of Europe over the increase of the bubonic plague in India, Formosa and some portions of China and the fear is expressed that it may set out on a western march. Europe has suffered so terribly from this awful visitant in times past that the possibility of its spreading to that continent may well cause the utmost precautions to be taken. The most calamitous visitation occurred five and a half centuries ago, when for three years Europe seemed to be given over to destruction. If we may believe the writers of those days, Nature seems to have risen against mankind. Awful earthquakes made great chasms from which issued deadly vapors; the ground was filled with poison so that burrowing animals died in their holes; the water springs in many places were so impregnated with poison that cattle died by thousands; strange sights were seen in the heavens, frightful storms and floods devastated the land, meteors flashed by thousands through the night skies, but, worse than all, the hand of death smote almost every household. Some margin must be allowed in reading the accounts of this period of woe for the exaggeration to which fear and superstition would give rise, but there can be no question that never in historic times has another such calamity befallen the human race. Some of the later historians of this pestilence have estimated that the number of deaths from the plague in Europe, exclusive of Russia, exceeded 25,000,000. The number who perished in the last named country is unknown, but it was enormous. There is no means of approximating the number of victims in Asia, but some light is cast upon it by the fact that in the floods in China, which formed simply one incident of the awful three years, 4,000,000 people perished. All attempts at calculating the number who died during this period of calamity must be dismissed as futile. We only know for certain that from 1347 to 1351 the Black Death held the Old World in its relentless grip. All sorts and conditions of men were among its victims. It spared neither age nor sex. No class was too exalted to escape. The wealthy and the poor suffered alike. Since that time there have been other visitations of the bubonic plague, but none which can in any degree compare with this.

The best authorities believe that the improved sanitary conditions of our day and the later discoveries in medical science will enable a successful resistance to be made to the Black Death if it extends beyond the borders of Asia. In order to be prepared for anything that may happen the French government has sent an agent to China to experiment with the bacillus of the disease, in the hope that a method of inoculation against it may be discovered. As yet there is no reason to suppose that any cases have occurred west of Bombay, although reports to that effect have found currency in the dispatches. It appears that the mortality in Bombay equals about sixty per cent. of the reported cases. This is a much lower average than marked the ravages of the pestilence in Europe and is probably due to the increased skill and knowledge brought to bear upon its treatment. To a certain extent the ports on the Pacific coast of American are exposed to the plague, but fortunately the points at which it can be introduced are few and these can be very easily guarded.

THE ROUTE TO THE YUKON.

Among the matters which will come up for consideration before the legislature will be how best to reach the Yukon basin from the Coast. The permanency of this region as a gold producer may be regarded as established and it is altogether probable that systematic prospecting will bring to light much additional valuable ground. As the greater part of the auriferous area drained by the Yukon is Canadian territory, it becomes a matter of some importance to have as near as may be an all Canadian route into it. Until the boundary of Southeastern Alaska shall be finally determined doubt will remain as to the ownership of the head of Lynn Canal and also that of Taku Inlet. Three Seattle gentlemen have filed in the State of Washington a memorandum of incorporation of a company which proposes to build a railway by way of Chilcoot Pass to the Yukon waters. This has been done at the instance of some English promoters. Perhaps the uncertainty as to title may prevent anything being done for the present, at least, in the way of railway construction at this point. The attorney of the promoters stated a few weeks ago that he was entirely in the dark as to the intention of his clients. A good deal has been said about the feasibility of a route for a railway from the head of Taku Inlet to Lake Teslin, but the Inlet has a very bad reputation for storms, fogs and drifting ice. Whether or not the Stickeen affords a solution of the problem is yet an open question. There is an entire absence of official information on the subject and considerable difference of opinion among such private individuals who claim to be able to speak from experience. There are, however, some considerations in favor of this route which render it very desirable that its availability should be established if possible.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

THE Alberta Herald has resumed the discussion of the government of the Territories and, speaking for that one of them in which it is published, says, that the people are "unyieldingly opposed to a provincial government for the whole Territories." It tells us that "they want to work out their own destiny as a part of the western half of the Territories, or, failing that, as the eastern half of British Columbia, with whose interests they are tenfold more wrapped up than with Eastern Assiniboia's." The Herald seems to be under the impression that some action in the premises may be taken during the coming session of parliament and if this is the case the people of British Columbia might with advantage give the subject some consideration. There are reasons why it might be desirable to add Alberta to this province, and there are also reasons why such a step might be objectionable. On the general question of governing the Territories there is a good deal to be said.

DISCUSSING the proposed Crow's Nest Pass railway the Alberta Plaindealer suggests that the government ought to build and own the road, acquire the Calgary and Edmonton line, the lease of which to the Canadian Pacific has expired, and extend it to the International Boundary, where connection could be made with the Great Northern. This done, it proposes that the Canadian Pacific and the Great Northern should be invited to tender for running rights over the Crow's Nest Pass road, the rates of transportation to be subject to government supervision. It would be difficult, we fancy, to get parliament to assent to a proposition involving the expenditure of some fifteen millions on a railway, which when constructed might pass under the control of a foreign corporation. The country is not quite so much between the devil and the deep sea in this matter as our Alberta contemporary thinks.

THE dispatches say that there is to be an inquiry into charges of political partizenship preferred against certain New Brunswick fishery officials. We are not told whether the partizanship consisted of making use of their official positions for the benefit of political friends or in taking an active part in an election campaign. If the former, it ought to be investigated and be punished by dismissal; if the latter, we submit it is a prostitution of the functions of the government to appoint a court of inquiry to investigate the manner in which a citizen of Canada exercises his inherent rights as a British subject. It is desirable that office-holders should abstain from political partizanship at elections, and if any of them choose to disregard this recognized principle they have no reason to complain if they are called upon to accept their share of the consequences of defeat; but if their participation in a campaign has not been sufficient to be self-evident, and if it is necessary to appoint a commission to discover proof of its existence, it can hardly be said to be offensive in its nature or to merit the penalty of dismissal.

ON election day our esteemed evening contemporary expressed its surprise at the COLONIST's remarks in regard to the introduction of Dominion politics into the municipal contest, which it said had led many persons, who had intended to cast their votes for Messrs. McCandless, McGregor and Kinsman, to vote for Messrs. Macmillan, Riddell and Dwyer. This being so, it would be interesting to know how many votes the latter gentlemen would have had if these "many persons" had voted as they originally intended. In order that the public may be informed of the real political strength of the gentlemen in question, without the unexpected reinforcement due to the COLONIST's statement, our contemporary ought to tell us how many persons were influenced as it alleges. In view of the fact that their average vote was under 400, one is curious to learn how they ever expected to be elected under normal conditions.

SENATOR Sherman is to be the Secretary of State under McKinley. This office is the only one in the Cabinet in which other governments are at all interested. Senator Sherman is a conservative man, although he rather lost his head a little a year ago over the Venezuelan business, when he did a turn at tail-twisting, which would have done credit to that belligerent, but otherwise amiable gentleman, Senator Lodge of Massachusetts. We venture the prediction that with Sherman in charge of foreign affairs the ensuing four years will not witness a revival of the misnamed "spirited foreign policy," which consisted for the most part in an emulation of the man from Tipperary who asked: "Will any gentleman oblige me by stepping on the tail of my coat?"

MR. BECKLES WILLSON, the special commissioner to Canada of the London Daily Mail, has had exceptionally good opportunities for judging of the people of the Dominion, and when he states, as he did to-day to the COLONIST, that from ocean to ocean he found the people animated with confidence in bright days to come, he gives testimony which will be read with delight. Mr. Willson says the enthusiasm is confined to no class, but is manifest in every department of industry. This is as good a report as Canadians could wish any one to send to England. Confidence begets confidence.

"THE Silver Streak" which separates the white cliffs of Dover from France is not to be pierced by a tunnel after all, but the coal mines which lie beneath the waters of the channel will be exploited instead. But what guarantee have we that the coal mines may not be worked from the French side also and that some day the miners of both countries may not shake hands in the middle of the No Man's land which lies below the sea?

THE Columbian wants some one to tell it "just how many Crow's Nest-Kootenay and Kootenay-Coast railway schemes there are in the air at present." In view of the anxiety of so many people to construct these roads, how would it do for the province to ask for bids specifying how much of a bonus they will give for the privilege of building either or both of them?

Senator Sherman, who is to be McKinley's Secretary of State, says that the incoming American administration will not interfere in Cuba in any way, but will leave Spain to apply to the island the programme of government reforms already decided upon by the Canovas ministry. This is the severest blow that the hopes of the insurgents have ever received.

THE pastoral letter, to be read to-day in the churches within the diocese of Quebec, deals with the Manitoba school question in a very diplomatic way. There is no abandonment by the church authorities of the position which they have taken, but they have been careful to avoid placing themselves in an attitude of political hostility to the civil powers.

THE Comox News notifies the provincial government that a liberal grant is expected for the Nanaimo-Union-Comox trunk highway. It not unreasonably asks that the local highway system should be connected as soon as possible with the road system of the island.

THE New York Tribune has a correspondent in London who has figured out that the Queen's savings amount to something between $150,000,000 and $200,000,000, with some probability that they exceed the last named sum. The correspondent probably has not the slightest idea of what he writes about, except that he is doubtless correct in saying that Her Gracious Majesty will not leave the nation a legacy of private debts to be paid by the taxpayers.

THE Legislature of the State of Washington has just elected a speaker, a gentleman named Cline, of Whatcom. Speaker Cline was a member of the former legislature and it casts a flood of light upon the doings of that body when we read that, in addition to the regular oaths to support the constitution, he made the members swear that they will not steal any of the state property at the close of the session.

THE Spokane Chronicle draws attention to the great lack of milch cows in West Kootenay and expresses the hope that they will be shipped in from the Coast, as there are at present none too many in Eastern Washington.

THE London Chronicle wants an international celebration of the signing of the arbitration treaty, in which respect it is just two days behind the COLONIST.

THE CANADIAN PRESS.

Altogether, there seems to be a large body of circumstantial evidence in favor of the bright prospects which British Columbia has before it.—Mail and Empire.

Possibly it is difficult for our readers sometimes to tell just where we are politically. We do not wonder at their difficulty, we often have difficulty to discover that ourselves.—Fredericton Reporter.

It would be difficult to point out in what particular Mr. Beaven has not carried out the programme on which he was elected last year, so far as he was permitted to do so by the council.—News-Advertiser.

Canada should allow no more pulpwood to be exported. It should all be converted into pulp, if not into paper, before it leaves the country. The tendency of the times is towards concentrating the manufacture of pulp and paper in one establishment—Toronto World.

To be candid, the Nor'-Wester trusts that the Senate will reject the arbitration treaty. This it hopes, not because it has any objection to the principle of arbitration, but because the treaty has been rushed through without sufficient regard being paid to Canadian interests.—Winnipeg Nor'-Wester.

Men seem to see that there are glaring errors in municipal matters somewhere, and, after they have proved by experience that nothing is to be gained by a mere swapping of men, they may be ready for the real work of insisting upon reform in the system.—New Westminster Columbian.

In the province of Ontario letters of incorporation have been refused to parties desirous of forming a company, on the ground that no mining claim was actually owned by those seeking incorporation. This in itself may seem insignificant, and yet when it is looked into it really strikes the key-note to the whole company promoting business.—Midway Advance.

The people of the East will never get it out of their heads that the expense of Western development has been and is borne by them, whereas the facts that will have to be written by the faithful historian are that the West has been thus far developed almost entirely out of its own resources, and that every dollar spent by the East on the West has been returned with interest.—Calgary Herald.

BY WAY OF VARIETY.

Anything may be bought in London. The Exchange and Art has this cheerful advertisement. "Bargain—Lady leaving England permanently must sell family grave, holds five, marble slab."

A new block of flats in the West End of London displays the announcement: "To Let, for Lady Bachelors only."

An old Scotch lawyer, writing of an estate he had just bought, added: "There is a chapel upon it, in which my wife and I wish to be buried if our lives are spared."—Tid-Bits.

At a fashionable ball—Miss Walters—Miss de Peyster seems to have something on her mind to-night. Miss Williams—Well, she ought to have something on her somewhere.—Somerville Journal.

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NOTICE.

Notice is hereby given that sixty days after date I intend to apply to the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works for permission to purchase 160 acres of pre-emption land, situated at St. Peters Springs, about 7 miles north of Alkali Lake, Lillooet District, described as follows: Commencing at the N.W. corner, thence south 40 chains; thence east 40 chains; thence north 40 chains; thence west 40 chains to point of commencement.

HENRY BOWE.

Alkali Lake, B.C., Jan. 8th, 1897. ja16

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de11 T. H. LINSCOTT, Manager, Toronto, Ont

NOTICE.

The annual meeting of the Fruit Growers' Association of B.C., will be held in Victoria on Friday, the 29th day of January, 1897, at 11 o'clock a.m.

T. G. EARL, President.

ja6-d-w A. H. B. MACGOWAN, Secretary.

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