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## PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION.

The Government of British Columbia is doing good work and it is finding the members, as a rule, fairly anxious to expedite business, though the Mayor of Victoria, the leader of the Opposition—does all he can to block the way. We suppose it is because he desires to make himself heard, as he has said little, if anything, worth listening to, while he has absolutely done nothing. The Bill to establish a Bureau of Industrial Statistics and a Board of Arbitration has taken its second reading, the principles at issue being thus endorsed; it being in detail that it is now likely to be modified and possibly improved. Then the Bill to establish a Provincial Board of Health has also been advanced to its second stage, as well as several other sufficiently important public measures. We are pleased to see progress like this accomplished and expect to see a comparatively early prorogation with a good amount of practical and beneficial legislation as the outcome of the session.

## THE CREDIT SYSTEM.

In Manitoba there has been of late considerable newspaper controversy as to the causes of the troubles of the farmers. One of the interested parties thus expresses himself in a recent number of the *Manitoba Free Press*. "Behind all the talk that is indulged in by the farmer in regard to impudent men and to those who charge high rates of interest there is really the credit system, and the only way the terrible drain on the finances of the farmer can be stopped is by putting an end to that system. The farmer realizes this, but as long as he can get goods on credit he will get them and the result is disastrous. Buying and selling goods on credit is morally indefensible and commercially ruinous. The farmer who does pay for his implements or his other goods has to pay for the implements and goods of the farmer who does not pay; he has to pay the seller a profit on all such sales as well as on his own, and he has to pay for the risk the seller runs in selling on credit."

There are many other classes of persons to whom the practice of affording almost unlimited credit has proved to be a curse instead of a blessing. How many in British Columbia—and in this very city of Victoria, buyers and sellers alike are of this opinion by experience. In town and country the same view will be found

to obtain. But among the worst offenders is the farmer who as a business man does exclusively a cash trade, but, when it comes to buying, leads all others in the long credit terms demanded.

## PANAMA CANAL MATTERS.

The correctness of the trite old maxim that "honesty is the best policy," must by this time be appreciated by M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, whose name, no matter his present condition, must be handed down in honorable connection with that world beneficent enterprise, the Suez Canal. Strictly speaking, no doubt the old man may possibly not be personally open to the charge of dishonesty save to the extent that he may have, in order to secure the carrying out of his pet scheme, the Panama Canal, have winked at the rascalities of others, hoping doubtless that all would come out right in the end, and that few, if any, people would be really the worse off. He seems to have staked everything on what, we dare say, appeared to him to be his last chance; and other people having had more to do with the actual conduct of the business than he had himself, he may not have been aware of all that was done. Unfortunately, however, in his case he cannot congratulate himself with the reflection that all is lost but honor, since his own personal reputation has been bankrupted by what if he did not do himself was done in his name by others. No doubt far less honorable, far less scrupulous and far less public spirited men have contrived to leave this world without any public scandal or stain upon their records, and hence the news of his sentence to five years' imprisonment would be received with very great regret in all parts of the world. Rightly served will be the verdict in connection with the other guilty parties whose known number is likely to be materially increased, the government of the French republic having announced its intention to get at the bottom of the whole business, no matter who suffers. The spectacle presented by the last days of poor Ferdinand de Lesseps is, indeed, a saddening one.

## HAWAIIAN ANNEXATION.

It has been manifest that for a long time the United States have had the Kingdom of Hawaii on their list and only waited for a convenient opportunity or excuse to pounce upon it and forcibly annex it to their already unwieldy and extensive domain. The action of U. S. Minister Stevens in causing American marines to be landed and to make a demonstration at a critical juncture was no small part of a scheme which had been long preparing. How far our neighbors may ultimately succeed in effecting the objects they contemplate remains to be seen. Americans at Washington, at San Francisco and at Honolulu were the prime conspirators for the whole thing was nothing short of a prearranged conspiracy.

The object of the former was to obtain a naval station on the Pacific, and, in addition, to prevent, if possible, Great Britain establishing herself at that point. They tried the same game in Samoa but failed, the consequence being the continuance of

a most unsatisfactory condition of things there intensified as it is by European rivalries. We have heard the Monroe doctrine proclaimed time and again during the last few days; but the Americans forget that it is not a doctrine to which the nations of the world would subscribe, and it may cost them something if they have too much to say on the subject. Americans at San Francisco have good reason to desire Hawaiian annexation, their object being to control the trade of the islands, while the Americans on the islands expect to be benefitted by a substantial American bounty on the sugar produced there. They also seek to crush out the native element which has little sympathy with them and their objects.

As a contemporary puts it in a nutshell, "The revolt of Hawaii resolves itself into an attempt of about three thousand American planters, (representing less than five per cent. of the Islands' population) to pocket plenty of bounty 'boodle,' and at the same time govern at their own sweet will a subjected native population. All this to be done under the aegis of the stars and stripes and in the abused name of Liberty." While the American professes to believe that all men are equal, he sets himself up—to use a common expression—as "a darned sight better."

## NOVA SCOTIA'S COAL DEAL.

News comes from Ottawa to the effect that the attention of the Governor-General has been directed to the fact that the bonding of the coal mines of Cape Breton to an American syndicate might, under certain contingencies, interfere with the supplies of fuel to Her Majesty's fleet on the North American station, and that in consequence it might be well for the Dominion authorities to give special attention to the subject. Doubtless this will be done. In any event, the notification having been made, a grave responsibility rests upon those who, when necessity demands, have the function of disallowing provincial legislation. Besides this consideration, there are some other circumstances that, now the act has passed the legislature, have suggested themselves as being worthy of more attention than they have so far received. It may be all very well to say that the syndicate is bound to pay the royalty on a certain quantity of coal whether that amount be produced or not; but there are occasions—as have been manifest in connection with many other branches of industry—when it has been worth the while of the capitalists to shut down completely, thereby pauperizing the people who, until the deal was effected, had been in steady employment.

Would it pay Nova Scotia to have her miners and their families rendered dependent on charity or, as the only other alternative, forced to emigrate? This consideration is one of serious, nay of vital importance. Then again the length of the lease to the Americans is another very serious matter. It is no less a term than a hundred and nineteen years, a longer term than the average working life of five generations of miners. If this be allowed, what kind of a place is it not possible to make of that rich and important part of the Dominion? Talk of Irish poverty, the