The Colonist.

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TRAILS ON THE ISLAND.

The meeting between the government and a delegation representing the Vancouver Island Development League, which took place yesterday at the Parliament Building, was an occasion of more than usual interest. Our report of what occurred tells the story so fully that repetition here is needless, and we speak of the matter only to comment upon the significance of the action on the part of the representatives of the League and the readiness shown by the Government to meet the request preferred. Certainly it is an excellent thing to find the people of the Island so thoroughly aroused as to the necessity of action. This great Island has been content to remain quiescent for a long time, while efforts were made successfully by other parts of the province to have undertaken those public works, which are needed for their development. It was difficult to arouse any very great degree of public interest, and possibly the reason was that the psychological moment for action had not come. There seems to be a very general conviction that it has now arrived, and it is highly satisfactory to find gentlemen, representing all lines of business and all sections of the Island, united in an effort to promote the common welfare. The announcement made by Col. Prior, as to what the business men of Victoria have already done in the way of providing funds for the work of the League, gratifying though it was, is only in keeping with what is being done elsewhere on the Island. There has been a thorough awakening, and we anticipate results of the most advantageous character.

The attitude of the Government, as expressed by the Premier, was everything that could be desired. It was more than an expression of sympathy, for it promises expenditures along the line asked. Mr. McBride explained that the estimates having been passed, it was not the intention of the Government to ask for any further appropriations, but he pointed out that a very considerable sum has been already provided for contingent expenditures, and from this as well as from the larger grant available for public works on the Island, he had no doubt that the wishes of the League could be satisfactorily met.

Under these circumstances we feel able to claim that the first overt act of the Development League has been attended with great success. Mr. McBride did not say, and the delegation did not ask him to say, that the Government will undertake to make this year all the trails suggested on the map submitted by Mr. Sutton. This map was only intended as a suggestion of what might be done, and it was made clear that the delegation expected the Government to take the whol subject into consideration and decide upon what was best to be done. This request has met with a very favorable response.

We take occasion to say a few words as to the attitude taken by the representatives of this city, and by Mr. Brewster, the only other member of the House upon the delegation. The absence of other Island members was probably due only to their not being aware of the intention of the delegation to meet the Government. Mr. Brewster was present as representing the branch League of his own district, and it is interesting to know that he attended in pursuance of a telegram from that branch. Mr. Brewster's observations were timely and in excellent spirit. The city representatives spoke warmly upon the proposals advanced by the League, and the Premier, having temporarily divested himself of his official status, and speaking as a resident and representative of Victoria, was enthusiastic in his expression of hearty sympathy with its work. In saying this about the city members, we wish to add that there is absolutely nothing political in the movement which led to the meeting of yesterday. Mr. Brewster placed the matter in the right light when he said that he was participating in a movement which was absolutely non-political. Yesterday's meeting was full of promise, and this not only because of what is likely to result directly from it, but because of the harmonious and enthusiastic spirit shown in relation to the development of the Island.

THE SUFFRAGETTES

The demand by a certain section of the women of England to be given the franchise is one of the most extraordinary incidents of the present day. It seems to have sprung up like a mushroom, and on reading the accounts of it one is reminded of other instances, when a considerable part of certain communities have been seized with a species of frenzy. It recalls the famous tulip craze. It does not seem to have occurred to the belligerent ladies, who fight with the police, chain themselves to seats in public places, waylay public men and generally make themselves obnoxious, that they are going to work in the surest manner possible to defeat their own objects. They are demonstrating their own unfitness for the very thing they ask. There have been a good many reforms brought about in the years that have passed, but none of them have been the result of such frantic proceedings as the suffragettes indulge in. If it is alleged on their behalf that they can discover no other way we reply that if such is the case they are unfit to have any influence in determining the policy of the nation. The suffragettes are proceeding upon the assumption that the only things that stands between them and the so-called privilege claimed by them are the ministers of the Crown and a few other members of Parliament. They seem to think that the nation is anxious to give them what they ask for, and that they have only to cry out loud enough and make nuisances of themselves sufficiently to induce a weak-kneed Prime Minister to concede their demands, to have them ratified by the people of the United Kingdom. There was a time, and it was not very long ago, when Mr. Asquith seemed not indisposed to look favorably upon woman suffrage; but if his views have not been changed by the folly of the advocates of that measure, he has less sense than he is credited with, and his actions belie his state of mind. He seems heartily sick of the whole business and he well may be so.

We do not say woman suffrage to as full an extent as it is enjoyed by men might not prove a good thing, when the women are prepared for it; but we do say that nothing better illustrates that the women of the United Kingdom do not want it than the attitude of the vast majority of them towards the suffragettes. There is absolutely no popular demand for women suffrage, and if the excited ladies, who have displayed such extraordinary ingenuity in making themselves ridiculous, cannot recognize this fact, it is only because they are blinded by their own passions. It seems to us that the true field for the operations of the suffragettes is among women. When women really want the ballot they will get it, just as they get everything else that they really want. But the very great majority of them do not want it, and that being the case, their furious sisters are only making themselves absurd by indulging in a fad that will soon die out.

NANAIMO'S PLAN

Nanaimo is in favor of a general meeting of all the branches of the Vancouver Island Development Association to discuss the building of a railway having direct connection with the Island. We are very glad that our friends in the neighboring city have made this suggestion. We presume that the idea is to hold a conference which would deal with the specific question mentioned and no other. That such conference would be productive of good we do not doubt and heartily favor its being held. We are becoming more and more convinced that if the whole of the people of Vancouver Island unite in a demand for the accomplishment of the enterprise in question the effort will result in success at no distant date. And when we get ready to act so as to make demands for recognition to our claims we might take a leaf out of the book of the people of Vancouver. Vancouver has a big scheme for harbor improvement. All the people of that city are united on the question, but instead of contenting themselves with passing a series of resolutions setting forth their wants, they appointed about twenty delegates and chartered a special car, which is even now speeding on to Ottawa, where the government will be made to "sit up and take notice." We say in all seriousness that if the people of this Island were to unite on the question of rail connection with the Mainland, and send a powerful delegation down to Ottawa, we would accomplish more in the furtherance of the enterprise that in years of argument at long distance and the passing of resolutions. We believe that the people are nearly ready for action of that sort, and therefore most heartily welcome the suggestion emanating from Nanaimo.

LORD MILNER

The Ottawa Free Press makes a violent attack upon Viscount Milner because of some rather absurd observations regarding him made in the London Daily Mail. It seems to place a gratuitous burden upon the distinguished viscount to hold him responsible for the extravagances of the London paper, which, we are quite sure, is not charged by Lord Milner with the expression of his views upon any subject whatever. We have had of late many remarkable illustrations of callow journalism on the part of the British metropolitan newspapers, some of which seem to have got into the hands of irresponsible youths, if one may judge from the things they print upon Imperial questions. The Mail's article, which caused the outburst on the part of the Free Press, reads as if it might have been written to be delivered in the course of a discussion in a college debating society, and to assail Lord Milner because of its crudity and bumptiousness seems unreasonable.

Those persons, who had the good fortune to encounter Viscount Milner in this part of Canada were not impressed with the idea that he came here as a savior, or that he fancied he had discovered the approaching death of British sentiment here, and felt it to be his mission to revive it. He rather seemed to be in Canada in the capacity of a statesman, endeavoring to form his opinions at first hand. He was careful to get the opinions of others and not given to expressing his own, and in none of his speeches did he pose as a savior of the Empire, taking only the position of a man, who had learned one very important thing by his trans-Canadian tour, namely that the Imperial fabric must rest, if it is to be permanent, upon the foundation of equality. We think it may be assumed, without inviting disaster, that Lord Milner is quite as desirous of doing well by the Empire as any individual, who may happen for the time being to be charged with the duty of writing editorials for any Canadian newspaper, that his opportunities for observation have been just as good and that his judgment is just as valuable. We might even go so far as to suppose that he has had larger facilities for forming trustworthy opinions, a riper experience in the wider affairs of government and to be in a position to work more efficiently for the good of the British people than even an Ottawa newspaper; but it is not necessary to go to such an extreme. He has, we may assume, an equal amount of knowledge, equal opportunities to test public sentiment, an equally ripe judgment and an equal degree of patriotism, and if this is the case, surely there is no justification for any Canadian paper to assail him simply because some callow youth has written bumptious things about him. But then callowness is apt to beget callowness, as our Ottawa contemporary has demonstrated.

A RAILWAY POLICY.

The Alberta government is nothing if not courageous, and the railway policy, which has just been sanctioned by the legislature of that province, is framed on heroic lines. The great sum of $27,500,000 has been provided for either by guarantee or bond issues. The aid to the Canadian Northern, which provides for 900 miles, of branch lines, and to the Grand Trunk Pacific, which provides for 500 miles of branch lines, is in the nature of guarantees. We are not advised how it is proposed to raise the $20,000 a mile to be devoted for a line from Edmonton to Fort McMurray. But the total sum is calculated to produce a profound impression. It is $2,500,000 more than the cash grant, which the Dominion gave to the Canadian Pacific Railway company, and the burden is assumed by a province, which, at the time that grant was proposed, did not contain enough white inhabitants to form a moderately large village. Truly the last quarter of a century has witnessed remarkable development in Canada.

Great interest attaches to the announcement that aid has been granted to a line to Fort McMurray. This Hudson Bay post is on the Athabasca river, and is about 250 miles nearly north of Edmonton in a direct line. If our information is correct, there is excellent navigation on the Athabasca from this point to Lake Athabasca, which is a body of water 230 miles long and with an average breadth of 30 miles. The proposed railway will be the means of opening a great area, the resources of which are not fully known but have been sufficiently demonstrated to warrant the most hopeful anticipations from their development. The adoption of this bold policy cannot fail to have a stimulating effect upon the prosperity of Alberta.

It is proper to direct attention to the fact that the guarantees are apparently confined to the bonds of two companies only. Premier Rutherford is on record as opposed to the guaranteeing of isolated railway enterprises. In the case of the Canadian Northern the guarantee is of bonds issued by that company; in the case of the Grand Trunk Pacific the guarantee is of bonds issued by the Grand Trunk Pacific Branch Lines railway company. Hence in both instances the government has the security of the credit of great companies.

VANCOUVER ISLAND IRON

In his speech in the course of the Budget debate, Mr. Thomson, one of the representatives of the city in the Legislature, demonstrated two of the points made by the Colonist yesterday, when speaking of the part taken by business men in the debates. He showed, as Mr. Macgowan did on the previous day, that the opinions of non-professional men are of great interest and almost always clearly expressed. He also showed how useful a member can be if he devotes himself occasionally to the presentation of ideas regarding the possible development of the province. Of the several matters touched upon by him, that to which we propose to address ourselves today is the future of the iron industry on Vancouver Island. Mr. Thomson said that we can manufacture pig iron here for $12 a ton as against $15 a ton in Tacoma or Seattle. We quote his observations on this point:

Vancouver Island was most fortunately situated with regard to its iron deposits. Not alone on the west coast, but on the east coast as well and on Texada island there were vast iron deposits. Already pig iron from Texada island had been used in the construction of several United States battleships, the Nebraska at Seattle, and the Olympia, Monterey, Charleston and Oregon at San Francisco. If the Americans could get iron in their own territory they would not come here for it.

In other respects also Vancouver Island had great advantages for the manufacture of pig iron. We can manufacture pig iron here for $12 a ton as against $15 a ton in Tacoma and Seattle, and this does not take account of any Dominion bonus. The main reason for this is the cheap and economical way we can assemble our materials. The island is cut up by waterways and almost all the iron deposits are on water. We have also coal mined here that is not surpassed on the continent. Not only is our coal superior to that used in the state of Washington, but also to the coal used in the Carnegie works in Pittsburg. The Pittsburg coal contains 59.70 per cent. of fixed carbon as against 68.25 in our coal; and its ash is 7.16, as against 5.92 in our coal. The analysis is twenty per cent. in favor of the manufacture of pig iron on Vancouver island.

In 1891 Japan bought three million dollars' worth of pig iron on the Pacific coast, principally at Seattle. In 1901 she bought six millions worth. There was no reason why we should not have large iron works here at an early date. In leaving the subject of iron Mr. Thomson quoted Andrew Carnegie's statement.

"The seat of manufacturing is now, and will continue to be, more and more, simply a question of where the requisite raw materials are found under suitable conditions. Capital and skilled labor have lost the power they once had to attract raw materials. These now attract labor and capital."

Information of this character cannot be spread abroad too widely, and we can think of no better way in which representatives can serve their costituents than by dealing with practical questions in this practical way. The people of British Columbia will welcome more speeches of such a character. While we are making special reference only today of the iron of this and the adjacent islands, it is right to mention that on the mainland very extensive deposits of excellent iron ore are reported. The people of this province may look forward with a good deal of confidence to the rapid great expansion of the iron industry, when once it has been inaugurated. If the process of electrical smelting is adopted, there are many water-powers which can be utilized for the development of the necessary energy; and if the old process of coke smelting is adhered to, there is abundance of fuel and limestone. Conditions in British Columbia are ideal by nature for the production of iron, although doubtless the problem of transportation will have to be solved before some of the ore deposits can be utilized.

IMPERIAL EVOLUTION

People, who are not in a hurry, that is those who do not expect empires to be built "while you wait," must take a very considerable degree of satisfaction from the trend of events just now. Just to what extent the Dominion government and the War Office are working in sympathy for the establishment of an Imperial army we are not quite sure, and for the purposes we now have in mind it is not very material. There is a coming together between the two authorities on this very important question, and everything else is a matter of detail. If the only point reached is the interchange of officers, an important step has been taken. The principle of uniformity of control has been already recognized, and the new proposal carries the process of evolution one stage further forward.

In some observations attributed to Sir Frederick Borden the statement is made that Canada must limit her participation in Imperial defence to those things which are consistent with the control of her own revenues. To this position no reasonable objection can be taken. The people of the Dominion are not content to contribute money to be expended by the government of the United Kingdom, and we greatly doubt if ever they will be willing to do so. We think, however, that Canadians must prepare themselves to assume a greater degree of responsibility in the future than they have borne in the past. We are far from advocating a great military establishment, but we feel very strongly the necessity of being ready to do our duty, if ever the occasion comes when the Empire must be defended. We also think that the people of the Dominion generally would support the government in any practical scheme formed with that object. There have been no serious complaints at the cost of our militia establishment. All criticisms have been directed to the manner in which the money has been expended.

A FARMERS' PARLIAMENT.

The meetings of the Provincial Farmers' Institute are of very great interest for the discussions, which take place at them, cannot fail to be productive of much good to an exceedingly important industry. The members of the Institute bring to bear upon the several subjects before them a ripe and varied experience and a developed faculty of observation, which make for wise conclusions. The part which agriculture, in its several branches, is destined to play in the progress of British Columbia cannot well be over estimated. One excellent thing about agriculture is its permanency. If the lumberman cuts down the timber or the fire destroys it, generations may pass before any large percentage of the original wealth is restored. The miner takes out the coal and the ores, and every ton he extracts from the mine is just one ton less than was available before he touched it. No process can restore the mineral wealth of a country when once it has been exhausted. Even the harvest of the sea may be drawn upon too largely. But farming grows with its intelligent prosecution. It is true that the soil in some places has become exhausted, but it is also true that there are parts of the world where the land has been cropped continually from the remotest historical era, and yet yields profitable results to those who till it. One of the efforts of progressive agriculturists is to keep the soil at its maximum productiveness for an indefinite period of years, and we know of no better way of reaching such a result than the free interchange of views at such gatherings as those of the Farmers' Institutes. There was a time, but it has happily passed, when to speak of science in connection with farming was to invite ridicule. There was a reason for this, for the first gropings of science in the domain of agriculture were uncertain and too theoretical to be of much value to the man, who had to get his living out of the ground. But there has been a great advance of late years, and farmers are beginning to realize that there is a science in their avocation as well as in other things, but it is not so far as they are directly concerned, the science of the chemical laboratory but that of the field. Laboratory work undoubtedly plays an important part, but it is hardly fitted for application by men engaged in the actual cultivation of the soil. They must have the results of experience in practical agriculture, and they get these from the discussions of practical men. There is also a business side of farming, which such organizations as the Institutes promote. The modern farmer is every day becoming more and more a business man. He knows how to reckon his profits; he knows how to produce articles at the lowest cost and to sell them in the best market. The marketting of produce is, especially in a country like British Columbia, one of the most important aspects of agriculture, and hence it is satisfactory to see the Institute directing so much of its attention in that direction.

In a competition open to the world "Alberta Red" wheat was awarded first prize. This is a splendid achievement, and we congratulate the people of the neighboring province thereon.

Victoria makes a splendid showing in Bradstreet's weekly report on bank clearings—only Edmonton, of all the cities in Canada, standing higher in the increase in percentage for the similar period last year.

The news that 77½ per cent. of the Grand Trunk Pacific new bond issue in London has been left on the underwriters' hands is not pleasant reading for the people of Canada, who are so largely interested in the enterprise, but it is doubtless due to the repeated flotations of large Canadian issues during the last few months.

In the Commons on Friday Hon. Jacques Bureau, solicitor-general, was charged by Mr. Taylor (New Westminster) with breaking the law in regard to the franking privilege, the specific complaint being that Mr. Bureau's frank had been used on Liberal campaign literature previous to the last general elections. The Solicitor-General declared he had nothing to apologize for and said he would do the same thing again. A few minutes later, however, he received a sharp reprimand from his colleague in the cabinet, Mr. Lemieux, who stated that he intended to frame drastic regulations to prevent similar abuses in the future. Both parties in the Commons ought to unite to abolish the senseless practice of sending out over the country during every campaign tons upon tons of "literature" which a large majority of the people never look at, much less read.

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Clusters of violets and green leaves. Matt gold band on edge and rim, matt gold decorated handles. Splendid value this.

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March Weather Muddy Weather

March was ushered in like the "proverbial lion" alright, and we must expect some More rainy days. And rain means mud and mud means more trouble for the housekeeper, if she doesn't take the proper precautions. A couple of door mats solve the problem. Here is a great list—

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