

to San Francisco for its enterprise in undertaking to deal with the subject. We in British Columbia may reasonably expect that the coming fair will be of importance and benefit to us. Chicago is a long distance away, and the intervening miles of travel have doubtless prevented many strangers from coming over to us. But with the fair so near as 'Frisco it cannot but be expected that a considerable stream of travel will be brought this way in which will be found many who will read, mark learn and profit by the great advantages which our province presents. We must confess that we feel considerable interest in San Francisco's departure, particularly in view of the facilities that contemplated canal connections are likely to afford to trade between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

On the subject of the Nicaragua Canal, which appears to be the most feasible connection that is at present in sight, we take the following from the *San Francisco Call*:

"The present situation in the wheat and wheat-charter markets in San Francisco emphasizes the need for the Nicaragua canal. The monetary tightness compelled the farmers to sell much of their wheat at once and tonnage is closely held. The result is low prices for wheat beyond what foreign crops and markets warrant. The Southern Pacific will offer no rates *via* Galveston that will relieve the situation. The North American Steamship Company has been approached and may be able to help out to some extent; but such relief is only partial. There is the cost of trans-shipment at Panama and Colon, and the limited capacity of the North American line. With the canal in working order there would be no such thing as cornering tonnage for California wheat. At the first indication of any such movement a fleet of tramp steamers would be heading from all parts of Europe to Nicaragua and San Francisco. The tonnage market would be infinitely more amenable to natural trade conditions than now."

We can all of us appreciate how important it is for our trade to be relieved from dependence upon the means of communication that we at present possess. The voyage from Victoria or Vancouver, to London or Liverpool, is a long one aggravated by dangers and delays in rounding Cape Horn. It means an interval of from 120 to 150 days from point to point and the problem of rapid transit is in these days one of the most important that has to be dealt with. The Panama Canal is, for the present at least, a dead issue, and the Nicaragua project is the one which in the meantime presents itself under the most favorable auspices. There is a large volume of business, which might be done with Europe but for the heavy expense involved in carrying it across the continent by rail. It will not stand the delays involved in coming round on shipboard and hence what we estimate as an extensive reciprocal trade is not done. The Midwinter Fair, as it is termed, may, and most certainly will do much to promote trade if the transportation facilities are afforded, and, in addition, may be the means of leading capital, which is at present idle or is unprofitable, to be invested in a departure—not "patriotic" and fraudulent, as was the Panama project—to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

### BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

The British Columbia correspondent of the *Winnipeg Commercial* describes the recent flight through Canada of the British farm delegates who had been sent out by the Canadian High Commissioner to satisfy themselves as to the condition of the Dominion and the advantages which it offered for the settlement of a portion of the surplus population of the Motherland. He said:

"So far as any practical good is concerned, they might as well have stayed away, except that socially they went away well pleased with their treatment, which was all that could be desired. Incidentally they may have acquired some knowledge of the province, but a programme cut and dried for them before starting, or at Winnipeg, is not calculated to be productive of the best result. So many people, on some similar bent, have come in a similar way and gone and given their impressions of a province some 350,000 square miles in extent, and about which even few old residents are fully posted, that we may judge of what practical knowledge the delegates will have acquired by a trip which was simply a rush into the country, a rush through it to the various cities and a rush out again. Any report they may make, whether favorable or unfavorable, will be absolutely worthless as a guide to prospective old country settlers or any person else. Of course, the persons whom they met gave them all the information they could, but, of course, it was all favorable to the country, and without seeing the farm lands for themselves, under a variety of conditions, they could acquire no real knowledge of the province. But it is to be presumed it will always be thus."

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMERCIAL JOURNAL, in a recent issue, dwelt upon the impossibility of any advantages accruing from these hurried visits, which from the point of view of their inutility and expensiveness, might very well be made to more closely resemble angels' visits, in so far as being few and far between. What can these farmer representatives have possibly learned from their hurried journey, broken only by stops at what are regarded as important centres between dark and daylight, or *vice versa*? The only people who can possibly be advantaged by their jaunt are the delegates themselves, whose expenses are paid and who receive an *honorarium*, and the transportation companies over whose routes they pass. All this has to be paid for out of the public treasury. The Government and the public department concerned will no doubt endeavor to make a point out of the pretension that in this way they have done considerable towards inducing the arrival of immigrants from abroad; their non-success, as it must be, being accounted for by the claim that better times have reached the Mother country, and that in consequence the stream of emigration has been very much reduced. Sir Charles Tupper has invented many schemes to bring himself into prominence as a judicious expender of public moneys; but this is as thin as any of the dodges for which he may be given the credit.

### IMPERIAL HONORS

It is announced that the Minister of Marine and Fisheries has directed the attention of the Governor-General to the signal services rendered by a number of gentlemen in connection with the Behring

Sea case, and that the Parliament will be asked to recognize those services in a substantial manner. We have no desire to detract one whit from the credit that is due to these gentlemen, or at least some of those who have earned a reward far more than some others who have been taken special care of. We cannot, however, endorse the *Colonist* idea that "a more permanent and a more distinguishing recognition than the substantial one mentioned" might be conferred. There are already too many jackdaws figuring in peacocks' feathers, which most certainly would be the appearance presented were some persons so honored. Titles are cheap, and in fact are scarcely worth having, as has been shown by the refusals of certain unquestionably distinguished people to accept them. Britons and British institutions are, we hope, broadening out to an extent more in consonance with the ideas of Burns when he wrote "The rank is but the guinea stamp—

A man's a man for a' that."

Ours is the day of the masses, not of the classes, and the more the people recognize this the sooner will arrive the good time that is assuredly coming, for which we are being continually told to "wait a little longer." The genius of the nineteenth century is not towards snobocracy such as that which appears to commend itself to our morning contemporary. If anything is to be done for the parties in question in addition to having had their special services placed on record let it be in the direction favored by the late Sir Francis Hincks, who, on a noteworthy occasion, said he preferred cash in hand to prospective benefits. We are of opinion that it would save not a few people from humiliation were they spared such recognition as that against which we protest.

### EDITORIAL COMMENT.

BEFORE our next the Dominion Finance Minister and the Minister of Militia shall have arrived in the Province to consult with British Columbia merchants on tariff topics. We trust there will be a full and frank discussion of the special situation as it exists here, and that the minister will be impressed with our special requirements.

News has since our last been received as to the fate of the Canadian-Australian steamship *Miwera* which it appears went aground in the harbor of Honolulu on the 2nd of October instant. Her passengers, crew and the bulk of her cargo have been saved; but it is feared the ship will be a total loss. This is better than it might have been, though the actual and incidental loss is very severe, while the service has been seriously interfered with in its very inception, which otherwise had been most promising. The passengers for Victoria and Vancouver have arrived here. It is probable that a vessel will be found in Australia to replace the *Miwera*, a portion of whose cargo is expected to come up on the *Warrimoo*, though that part which is perishable will before this have either been destroyed or disposed of. It is said that the *Miwera* with her fittings represents a value of \$500,000.