

ABOUT MR. COTTON.

The Colonist seeks to excuse itself by accusing the Times. The policy of excluding from the Colonist reports of speeches and communications that are not strictly in agreement with the partisan views of its editor or bosses has been commented upon and condemned, at various times, by almost every person who takes an interest in public affairs. To justify its conduct in this respect the organ charges that the Times, imitating its example, has boycotted the junior member for Vancouver, Mr. Cotton. Says the organ:

"That member's name appears in the Times' proceedings of the legislature (leaving out the divisions), not more than seven or eight times during the present session, and in no debate there, even the presence of a report of his remarks."

The Times has not reported Mr. Cotton, or Mr. Semlin, or Mr. Turner, or Mr. Eberts, or any other member, as fully as in former years, it is true, for the simple reason that the reporter's instructions, up to the present time, have been to give condensed reports of the proceedings of the house. Mr. Cotton's name, it is alleged, has been mentioned only seven or eight times. That may be true or it may be false—we shall not go over the files to find out. Mr. Pooley's name probably has not been mentioned twice; yet it will hardly be said that we have boycotted Mr. Pooley. The fact is the Times has boycotted no member of the house, and when Mr. Cotton makes a speech that ought to be published, it will be published in the Times—certainly it will never appear in the Colonist.

The Times is accused of "boycotting" Mr. Cotton because that gentleman formed one of a delegation at the bye-election to congratulate Col. Prior on his appointment to the government and to speak in his behalf at a public meeting in Victoria. Mr. Cotton on that occasion, gave an example of hostility to a member of "his own party," as the Colonist defines the relationship, that surprised a good many people in Victoria and Vancouver; but the Times never charged that, in so doing, he was acting improperly, or that as a Conservative he had no right to appear on a Conservative platform. The Times has never been conducted on any such narrow or personal lines as the organ has schooled itself into thinking right and proper. As to the treatment Mr. Cotton, (himself the owner of a newspaper) receives from the Victoria press, the following will illustrate:

THE TORONTO MEETING.

A very large and thoroughly representative meeting in Toronto condemned the course pursued by the Dominion government in regard to the Manitoba school question. Of course this action of the Toronto people was most disagreeable to the faithful servitors of the government, therefore by all the rules of reasoning it must have been wrong. It is too bad that the rude and unintelligent denizens of the Toronto vilis should presume to criticize the doings of the good and refined combination at Ottawa. Their conduct is almost as wicked, in fact, as that of the Victoria citizens who ventured to hold a public meeting for the purpose of discussing the benevolent design of the local government to hand over the public domain to speculators. Such doings are well calculated to vex beyond the limit of endurance the righteous soul of any faithful organ. What makes the matter worse is the fact that the large Conservative representation at the Toronto meeting shows the divided state of the Conservative camp as regards this question. This fact is emphasized by the Toronto World, a prominent Conservative paper, in the following language:

The government must take the responsibility of any division in the ranks of the Conservative party, and in coming from Ontario into offering all the opposition that they can command to the proposed law interfering with the educational affairs of the province of Manitoba. As the World pointed out some days ago, there is hardly a single Conservative paper in the province of Ontario that justifies this conduct of the government or is ready to defend it. The Mail newspaper has made of itself a laughing stock by its trivial and petty attempts to evade the question by so-called exposures of weaknesses in the Liberal armor. But the respectable Conservative members of the province refused to follow any such course as that adopted by The Mail. They know that the great bulk of the Conservatives of Ontario feel that they have been deceived in this matter and that if they do not resist through the press, they are sending to a shackling of Manitoba. It is now quite clear that there are enough determined Conservatives at Ottawa outside of any assistance they may get from Liberals or Ontario, to prevent the passage of the remedial bill in the comparatively short time at the disposal of the government. It looks more than ever as if nothing in the way of legislation would be raised this session. The time of the house will be taken up chiefly in all its details and opposing it at every stage. This is the only resort left to those in Ontario who are opposed to the programme of the government;

and if any dissent or division comes, the government must take the responsibility and not those who ought to have been consulted, but who never were consulted, in deciding to adopt so arbitrary and uncalled for a programme as that of the Howell administration.

"It, the meantime those who are making the battle for Manitoba must have the support of a united Ontario. The boom of the first gun was started in Missey Hall on Saturday night."

CRUDE LEGISLATION.

There has probably never before been seen such a mass of crude and ill-digested legislation as the Turner government has laid before the house during the present session. The amendment to the school law yesterday underwent a severe process of chopping and changing, until the original proposals of the minister of education were hardly recognizable. There are very few people who will say that the restrictions which have been left in the bill would not be the better of a further overhauling. The land-sales bill when introduced was a startling exemplification of the government's capacity for blundering and for trifling with public interests. It is only too evident that the ministers are determined to force this measure through with its crudest and most iniquitous features unamended, though they practically confess by their actions that these are indefensible. Then comes the assessment bill, which in its original form was a fearful and wonderful measure for any government to propose, and which is calculated, even with the amendments spoken of, to do incalculable harm. The people of the mining district have declared against it with one voice. True, Premier Turner has, in presence of general disapproval, made some modifications, but these do not remove the great objection that the tax is a most inequitable one and will not be levied on all mines in proportion to their real value. The Ainsworth miners' meeting, for instance, declared that "on low grade ore, such as will average 15 ounces silver and 20 per cent. lead, the 2 per cent. tax on the entire output is equivalent to 15 per cent. on the net returns." The premier's amendments would reduce that rate, but they would do away with the fact that the Ainsworth mines must under the proposed method pay a higher rate than those which produce higher grade ores with practically the same expense for mining and treatment. The Rossland meeting suggested a much fairer method when it affirmed "that the basis of taxation on this industry should be the income derived from the business, to be ascertained in the same way as in other businesses." It is noticeable that none of the miners' meetings were opposed to a moderate tax on the industry, but all objected to the unfair method proposed and to the very high rate mentioned in the bill. And there seems to be a general and well founded fear that if the bill is passed with these provisions it will have the effect of frightening away much capital that would otherwise be invested in Kootenay mines. Apart from all this is the objection well taken by Mr. Semlin that no necessity for so great an addition to the tax burden has been shown. What does the government want to do with all the extra money it hopes to raise by means of this assessment bill and the selling of land warrants to speculators? The house and the public should be enlightened on this point before they are asked to accept the government's proposals. How long are the people expected to "go it blind?"

CONTROLLER WOOD'S TROUBLE.

Hon. Mr. Wood, controller of customs, is out of favor with a number of his Conservative constituents, and is threatened with opposition from his own party. The following requisition has been presented by the malcontents to ex-Alderman Cluff, of Brockville:

"Dear Sir,—We, the undersigned Liberal-Conservatives of the riding of Brockville, would most respectfully request you to become a candidate for this constituency at the coming election for the Dominion parliament. Our reasons for wishing to bring out a third candidate are many. In the first place we think the Hon. John F. Wood has long since ceased to represent the true sentiment of the Conservative party, and his concurrence in such deals as the Curran bridge, Sheik's Island dam, the Tay Canal, which cost the country \$500,000 and brings but a revenue of \$188, and his "Urial Heay" conduct towards Sir Mackenzie Bowell, are some of the reasons which impel us to condemn him, and ask you to become a candidate in the true Conservative interest. Mr. Cluff has stated publicly that he will comply with the request and appear as a Conservative candidate at the coming election. It appears that he has in the past been one of Mr. Wood's strongest supporters, and last year was elected as one of the Conservative ticket

for the Brockville municipal council. Unless the strenuous efforts of Mr. Wood and his friends are successful in removing Mr. Cluff from the field, the former's chances of re-election will be practically nil. Col. Prior must feel an exceedingly keen interest in the situation thus created for his fellow controller. He is himself engaged these days in assisting the government to hang the coercion millstone around Manitoba's neck, a work which he knows is not in consonance with Victoria's wishes. He may be cheered by the prospect of leaving Controller Wood's company while "walking the plank."

Toronto Globe: Conservatives in every part of the Dominion must realize that the attempt to create a Tupper boom has failed. The ministry were thoroughly discredited not only by their feeble meddling with industry and commerce when severe depression demanded statesmanlike legislation, but by their utter failure to deal with or even appreciate any of the grave questions with which they were confronted. Something had to be done to restore the lost confidence and build up the shattered reputation, and for reasons known only to the manipulators it was decided to inaugurate a Tupper boom. They turned in their plight to the man who had effectually deceived the Canadian people in 1878. The deposition of Sir Mackenzie Bowell was a necessary part of the scheme, for the expected deliverer would accept no inferior position. But the deliverer has come, and as a political force he has gone. The attempted boom has proved a flat failure. Sir Charles Tupper sits in the common playing official head to Mr. Foster's master mind.

ABOUT PERCENTAGES.

With no desire to prolong the controversy between the chairman of the school board and the principal of the North Ward school, we print the letter of "Ratepayer" on the question of percentages of reduction of teachers' salaries. That little "tempest in a teapot," we are pleased to think, has been allayed and the "entente cordiale" once again established. "Ratepayer" does not take sides, but simply endeavors to show the actual reductions in the teachers' salaries, leaving it to the reader to determine which of the speakers at the public meeting was in error. The salaries of 36 teachers, the writer states, were reduced, six were increased, and six were not changed. The "cut" in the 36 salaries reduced was over 14 per cent. That, we believe, was the real contention of the teachers at the public meeting.

THE BILL'S CHANCES.

It would appear that the chances of the remedial bill passing its second reading in the house of commons vary day by day. The changes may perhaps arise from the points of view occupied by the Ottawa correspondents when they are engaged in the "counting of noses." At all events, the number of Conservative members who are likely to vote against the bill is reported at one time as 18 and at another as 30, and ranges through the wide space between these extreme figures. On the other hand, one report states that only two French Liberals will vote with the government, while another gives eight as the correct number. But speculation on these points cannot be of great profit, since the matter of the second reading must be decided before very long. Probably Mr. Martin was right when he predicted at Toronto that the government would in one way or another influence enough of its disturbed supporters to secure the second reading of the measure. But what will come afterwards if this is effected? There are some 112 clauses of the bill, and it will take some length of time to pass all these through committee. There are threats that the anti-remedial Conservative members will endeavor to talk the bill out, which they might easily be able to do if the life of the present parliament comes to an end, as said, on the 25th of April. It must be remembered that the measure has to run the gauntlet of the senate after it passes through the house, and that would take some time though the government's followers in the "upper house" are not likely to make much trouble. And if it secures safe passage through parliament, what will the bill effect? Nobody seems to know beyond the very evident fact that it will cause plenty of trouble. Archbishop Langevin has stated plainly that he will not accept it as a part of what he wants, a declaration that is pregnant with disquietude to the public. If the bill is passed and the present government is successful at the elections the fight will be kept up year after year until the church authorities get their whole pound of flesh. The great majority of the people will be apt to agree with the opinion of the Winnipeg Free Press, which, after mentioning some proposed solutions of the trouble says:

"A better way is to drop the remedial bill and leave the question to the people of Manitoba themselves. No one disputes the constitutional right of the Federal Parliament to intervene, but every good citizen doubts the expediency of its doing so. It is a serious matter to break in the autonomy of the province, and it should not be done until evident beyond doubt that all other means have failed. That evidence has not yet manifested itself. The Manitoba government has signified its disposition to consider and deal generously with any grievance that may be shown to exist. It will be better to accept this assurance and act accordingly."

"Ours are not the only school troubles that have disturbed the Dominion. We have had them in all the Maritime Provinces, and not unlike our own. One after the other, in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, the minorities have complained of abuses and injustices, and appeals were made to the Federal Parliament for redress. Parliament was not clothed with the same authority to interfere as in the case of Manitoba, but in every instance it refused to take a side, and counselled the people of those provinces to settle their differences among themselves. They did so, and ever since and now their school affairs are being managed in a manner satisfactory to all concerned. It is to be said that the people of Manitoba are less capable of arriving at a satisfactory agreement? Even if there were a doubt, it would be better to take the risk of it than to mutilate the provincial autonomy and subject us to the irritation of a law that can neither be repealed nor amended."

Some instances of the freight rate freaks on the part of the Canadian Pacific railway were pointed out at a recent meeting of the Kamloops Board of Trade. Says the report:

"The matter of C. P. R. freight rates was discussed in the course of which it was pointed out that not only were Kamloops people paying on freight from Eastern Canada the rate to Vancouver plus the haul back, but the local rates were not in proportion to the mileage on the Pacific division, a discrimination being made in favor of the coast. It had been found that the rate from Vancouver to Salmon Arm was less than from Vancouver to Kamloops, plus that from Kamloops to Salmon Arm. There was much talk of a conference with regard to Revelstoke, so that Kamloops was shut out from any trade with the Big Bend or Kootenay. In fact it was at a great disadvantage with relation to any place east of Shuswap or west of Savona. The mileage for freight was being made in favor of the coast. It had been found that the rate from Vancouver to Salmon Arm was less than from Vancouver to Kamloops, plus that from Kamloops to Salmon Arm. 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