

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMERCIAL JOURNAL

ISSUED EVERY TUESDAY AT VICTORIA, B. C.

SUBSCRIPTION - - \$2.00 PER YEAR.

Advertising Rates on Application.

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VICTORIA, TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 1892.

INSOLVENCY.

At a meeting of the Vancouver Board of Trade, held last Friday evening, the report of the committee appointed to consider the proposed Insolvency Act was presented and read. The Act, an outline of which has appeared in a previous issue of THE COMMERCIAL JOURNAL, the committee believed, would supersede our present method of administering the estates of insolvent debtors. The only advantage, in the opinion of the committee, that could be gained by the proposed Act, would be the obtaining of his discharge by an insolvent debtor, the infliction of penalties upon fraudulent debtors and compulsory assignment in cases where a debtor refused to make a voluntary assignment. The latter, however, is open to abuse, in fact the committee are of the opinion that the Act could be made to act harshly against deserving debtors who might be temporarily embarrassed, and also that the expense of administering estates under this Act, especially in this Province, would be so great as to leave little if anything for the creditors. The committee are therefore of the opinion that the new Act is not at all adapted to the conditions prevailing in British Columbia. This report was adopted by the Board.

There are many points in the report to which commercial men in this Province might well take exception. It would be inferred that our merchants and business men generally are satisfied with the existing condition of affairs as regards the estates of debtors, which is really not the case. We realize the fact that it will be an extremely difficult matter for the Dominion Government to pass an Insolvent Act that would be applicable to the different provinces. In England, it is quite different. If the London Court of Bankruptcy declares a man bankrupt, that is conclusive; but in Canada, it is held that the law courts of the province of Ontario might declare a man insolvent, and he might come to British Columbia, and our courts here would not necessarily be bound by the adjudication. It appears to us that there is a way out of the difficulty, however, this is for the Federal Parliament to vest jurisdiction in matters of bankruptcy and insolvency in the Exchequer Court of Canada, and create the Supreme Court judges of the several provinces local judges of the Exchequer Court in Bankruptcy, with an appeal from their decisions to the Supreme Court of Canada. In this way, full faith and credit would be given to the adjudications of any of these judges in Bankruptcy

by any of the rest, and as the process of the Exchequer Court runs throughout Canada, the difficulties that we have pointed out may be obviated.

UNUTILIZED LANDS.

While almost in every direction new townsites are being "promoted" and "boomed" in every possible way by the speculative element interested in them, large numbers of lots in and near these places, which very much resemble the now celebrated town of Bogusburg, are held back for a rise with the hope of bringing them in, should the town project be successful, as Mr. or Messrs. So and So's addition. While these holdings, some of them in the city of "God knows where," are, in what is little short of an illegitimate manner, kept back from what would otherwise be their ordinary and natural development in the interests of "philanthropic" speculators, a great hubbub at Ottawa and elsewhere is being raised against the policy of reserving such large quantities of territory for the benefit of the Indians, the original owners of the entire territory, who have been choused and cheated out of much that belonged to them and are, indeed, corralled within, for them, comparatively restricted limits.

Much has been said both in Victoria and at Ottawa on the subject of the advisability, if not necessity, of removing the Indians from the Songish reservation, on the plea that they do not properly utilize it, and in the interest of the whites making it part and parcel of the city. Now, there is no denying the fact that there are numbers of white people who have grown rich—not on account of any praiseworthy enterprise on their parts, but because they managed to get their grip on lands when they were worth little or nothing, which they have in some cases divided into so called building lots, or hold them in bulk at such prices as no one can touch, on the strength of what people of more enterprise than they were ever possessed of, did to make them accessible, or to give them the other facilities that have made them eligible.

The greed of these people, it will readily be seen, is much more reprehensible in the public interest than are the ignorance, apathy and laziness which have been the means of causing so little to be done by the Indians on these reservations. And, among the men who are clamoring for the removal of the aborigines are some of those persons who think they see an opportunity of getting hold of more cheap properties, which they will also keep unutilized until the actual demands of business and civilization shall have materially augmented their present monetary value. No wonder these same speculative capitalists are regarded by many as "smart;" but they are none the less unenterprising and are, from the point of view of general progress, quite as great obstructionists as are the Indians. Both have their property rights, but if one class of them should be legislated against why not the other?

It is often remarked by visitors that the quantity of unutilized property within a growing city like this is altogether out of proportion to its size, and this land has

all the advantages and benefits of the improvements made at the expense of the public and of more liberal-minded owners without in any way contributing to the cost. It would appear that there are among us many who from association or otherwise have acquired not a few of the characteristics of the Chinaman who is so obnoxious to many people. THE COMMERCIAL JOURNAL is not now endorsing the doctrines and theories of Henry George and those who think like him, but is free to admit that matters being as they are there is no wonder that their ideas are increasing their hold upon public attention.

CHINESE REGULATION.

It is announced from the Dominion capital that the Government has determined to oppose Mr. Gordon's Bill to entirely do away with return Chinese certificates, on the ground that it would be an unwarranted breach of faith with those already holding certificates; but, in all probability, their duration will, in the future, be limited to six months—a period one would suppose to be sufficiently long, for all necessary purposes. *Apropos* to this question of certificates, an important judgment was, the other day, given in the United States Circuit Court sitting in appeal at San Francisco. Lee Hoy, a native of China, was arrested at Port Angeles, a year ago, on his arrival from Vancouver, B. C., on the ground that he had no certificate of indentification, and he was ordered remanded to China. He set up the claim, however, that he had been a resident of the United States for ten years, and engaged for a part of that time in business as a merchant, and that his trip to Vancouver was made for the purpose of visiting relatives. The district court released him, and the circuit court, in sustaining that decision, held that a Chinese merchant, domiciled in the United States, on his return thereto after a temporary absence therefrom, is not required to produce the certificate provided for in the act of July 5, 1884, in the case of Chinese first coming into the United States.

It is worth noting that the United States Treasury Department has decided not to admit to the United States as citizens of Great Britain Chinese who come to Canada and take out their naturalization papers. Their Chinese policy being what it is, this action on the part of the Washington authorities is not to be wondered at. Indeed, it has been stated that instructions have been given from Ottawa not to permit of such naturalization, when it is manifest that its sole object is to evade the law which obtains on the other side the line. In view of the early expiration of the existing Chinese Exclusion Act, it is announced that Inspector Mulkey, of Tacoma, has arranged to arrest all Chinamen who attempt to enter the State of Washington, should Congress fail to reenact that act before May 6. Chinamen so arrested will be held until the courts decide whether or not the exclusion act continues in force two years longer by virtue of the amendments made to it in 1884.