The Colonist.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1899.

TRIUMPH OF THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Turner and the Colonist were both in receipt yesterday of congratulatory telegrams upon the great constitutional victory. They came from all parts of the province. Mr. Turner had messages from Vancouver, Nelson, Kaslo, Kamloops, New Westminster, Revelstoke, Cariboo and Nanaimo. The public appreciation of the work done in Victoria is very great, but no greater than the case merits. It would have been an unhappy day for the province if the people of this city had declared for the subversion of constitutional government. But they spoke as the people of Victoria can always be trusted to speak, when a great issue is squarely presented to them, and from one end of British Columbia to the other there is a feeling of the liveliest satisfaction.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VICTORY.

The Colonist has no hesitation in telling the government candidates in Thursday's contest that they put up a very vigorous fight. For men, who were so clearly in the wrong on the great constitutional question, they have reason to feel pleased at their success in convincing so many voters that this was not the supreme issue in the campaign. No one supposes for an instant that the thirteen hundred and odd voters, who voted for Col. Gregory, like one of the government candidates, did not care for the Constitution. Doubtless the gentleman, who made this remark, is in point of fact not animated by any such indefensible sentiment. Now that it is all over, it is safe to say that a majority of the government supporters are well satisfied that the city pronounced for constitutional government. As a matter of fact, the government candidates, by not attempting to defend the constitutionality of the government's course in regard to the dismissal of Mr. Turner, practically conceded that it could not be defended. When the soreness of defeat passes away, they will feel no little satisfaction because so telling a blow was struck for responsible government by the people of Victoria.

One conclusion to be drawn from the opposition victory is that, so far as this constituency is concerned, and the same may be said of Cowichan, the Lieut.-Governor was not correct when he expressed the opinion that the Turner ministry had lost the confidence of the people. Another conclusion is that Mr. Semlin can no longer refuse to accept the responsibility for the dismissal and undertake to defend it upon the floor of the legislature. He cannot deny that the great feature of this campaign was the constitutional question. He cannot deny that the people of Victoria have told him at the polls that it is his duty to accept the responsibility for that dismissal and defend it if he can. If he refuses to do so, he should be compelled to, before one dollar of supply is granted.

JAPANESE IMMIGRATION.

The News-Advertiser deals with the Japanese immigration question at some length, but the only value possessed by the article is derived from the fact that the Vancouver paper is the exponent of the views held, or at least professed, by the Minister of Finance in the Semlin government. Our contemporary discusses the effect of Japanese competition in the labor market of the province, and does not at all overstate the case, but it seems to lose sight of the very important fact that the question is a larger one than this. There is not much to choose, so for as the man who works for wages is concerned, between men from Japan and men from Hungary, Poland or other countries of Continental Europe. The latter have driven thousands of Anglo-Saxon workingmen out of employment in the United States, and from almost every point of view are inferior to the Japanese. The workingmen of British Columbia, if they had to choose between Japanese on the one hand and Huns, Finns, Poles, and the offscouring of Europe on the other would certainly prefer the former. There seems to be a necessity for a certain proportion of cheap labor in every community, and if it is not supplied from one source it will be from another. This is a class of work which the ordinary Anglo-Saxon will not do, and we do not know that he is to be blamed. The fact cannot be disguised that the Anglo-Saxon is a higher type of man than some other races, and he will not descend to certain grades of labor, if he can by any possibility avoid it. On the other hand, there are many races which seize with avidity upon any kind of employment, no matter how menial.

It must be admitted, however, that these observations do not cover the case of Japanese competition in British Columbia, that is they do not fully cover it, for the Japanese are entering into fields of industry, which the Anglo-Saxons would be glad to occupy; but it is very difficult to see how this can be prevented. If British Columbia was an independent country, it could legislate as its people saw fit; but even in that case, they could not afford to omit to take account of the new relation in which Japan stands to Occidental civilization. Now it is necessary to take into account not only this, but the political relationship between the British Empire and that of Japan, and the result is a very complicated situation, the outcome of which cannot readily be seen. The News-Advertiser does not pretend to see its way any more clearly than the Colonist, the difference between the two papers consisting in the fact that the Colonist has the frankness to acknowledge the nature of the difficulty, while its contemporary talks around it.

Judging from the general aspect of the matter, it seems probable that the working men of British Columbia will have to make up their minds to be confronted with Japanese competition; but there is this satisfactory feature about it, namely, that what is now competition will soon become simple rivalry. The Japanese is adapting himself to the ways of Occidental civilization with even greater rapidity than is good for him. They never will be competitors in the sense that the Chinese are, and such competition as they do afford will diminish rather than increase in the future, for the Europeanized Japanese wants just as high wages as any one else, and proposes to live just as well. With every desire to aid the workingmen of British Columbia in maintaining their status and steadily elevating it, the Colonist feels it would not be honest with them if it did not say that in this matter they are building upon false hopes, if they expect to be able to exclude Japanese immigration in toto. The matter is one that will adjust itself after a little.

QUEEN'S COUNSEL.

The bill to provide for the appointment of Queen's counsel is a production which will excite a good deal of adverse criticism at the bar. It declares that all attorney-generals in the province, not now judges, shall receive commissions as Queen's counsel, and that hereafter two Queen's counsel may be appointed annually from barristers of not less than five years' standing in the province. So far there is nothing to except to in the bill. It is right to say that any person who fills or has filled the office of attorney-general should have the distinction of wearing silk and sitting within the bar. The restriction of the number of appointees to two annually is not unreasonable, nor is the section giving the attorney-general precedence over Queen's counsel, for this is the practice everywhere. The last section of the bill is one to which exception will be taken. It reads as follows:

It shall be considered contempt of court for any one not appointed as aforesaid to appear in or out of court in the recognized insignia of such counsel, according to the custom of the Imperial courts.

The idea of extending the prohibition to persons out of court is a relic of mediaevalism, which one would suppose this province had outgrown. If a student-at-law should, in a moment of awful thoughtlessness, put on a Queen's counsel's wig and gown, he would be liable to be fined and imprisoned. The next time the "Merchant of Venice" is played here, Portia will have to be careful that she does not come within this provision; but this only by the way, for such a law would doubtless be more frequently honored in the breach than the observance. The section is objectionable upon very much more substantial grounds. It is intended to cancel every outstanding commission of Queen's counsel. If it is desirable that the province should definitely provide for the creation of Queen's counsel—and upon this point there will probably be little difference of opinion—it is certainly not right to deprive the gentlemen, who now enjoy the distinction, of whatever merit attaches to it. The bill is only a new illustration of the determination of Attorney-General Martin to rule this province with an iron hand and according to his own sweet will. It would be refreshing to learn upon what meat this new Caesar feeds that he hath grown so great.

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS.

A correspondent requests that the Colonist will either repeat its remarks in regard to the relation of exports to imports, printed several months ago, or restate the matter with especial reference to the trade returns of the United States and Canada. What he wishes explained is how both Canada and the United States can be claimed to be prosperous, when in the former case the imports are increasing, and in the latter the exports are expanding at an unprecedented rate, while the imports are decreasing. The Colonist does not claim to be able to demonstrate any definite conclusion upon this extremely difficult question, but it may be able to point out a few facts that will serve to show how little reliance can be placed upon deductions from the "merchandise balance" of foreign trade. For this purpose, the trade returns of the United States for the last ten years may be taken. The smallest surplus in any one year since 1888 was in 1895, when the surplus of exports was $23,186,829; the largest in the year just closed, when it reached the vast total of $621,260,535, with imports smaller than they have been in any year during the decade. This is a very striking showing, and is calculated to excite attention everywhere. During the last ten years the aggregate surplus of exports over imports in the United States has reacher the enormous value of $1,337,393,711. What has become of this? It did not come to the United States in the form of money, because we find that during the same decade the United States sent abroad $129,647,732 more of gold than was imported. In other words, in the last ten years the United States has sent abroad $1,467,041,443 in goods and gold more than it has received. On the face of this it would not indicate prosperity, but something quite the reverse.

Every business man will know that the two sides of every account must balance; that is, for everything on one side there must be something on the other; it may be a loss; it may be cash; it may be a credit. This vast balance of nearly a billion and a half dollars is represented by something.

To illustrate how involved the matter is, let us take one explanation commonly resorted to by the American press. This is that the most of this balance is used up by Americans travelling in Europe. This reaches a very large sum every year, it being alleged that bills of exchange and letters of credit amounting to nearly a hundred millions annually are issued on this account alone. But it cannot be claimed that this accounts for any large part of the surplus exports, because against it must be set off the expenditures of foreign tourists in the United States and foreign investments in that country. An explanation, which is more reasonable, is to be found in the payments for freight on exports and imports. If the freight is placed at 5 per cent. of the value, it will account for payments during the last ten years of about $923,000,000; but, on the other hand, considerable United States capital is invested in foreign shipping, and would be entitled to receive its proportion of the earnings of the ships. Another point may be mentioned. The value of imports is the invoice price at the place of purchase, and in order to arrive at the real cost of the imports it is necessary to add a percentage for commissions or agents' expenses, a certain amount for charges upon the imports between the place where they were purchased and the point of shipment, and also for undervaluation. This makes the true value of the imports consist of the following items:

Producer's price,
Transportation charges to seaboard.
Commissions or agents' charges,
Insurance,
Freight,
Undervaluation.

The trade returns give the first item only, and there is no means of ascertaining the amount of the others. On the other hand, when we consider the exports of a country, it is necessary, if we would know what they realize, to take into account the following matters:

First cost,
Freight to the seaboard,
Freight to foreign ports.
Insurance,
Commissions or agents' charges,
The selling price abroad, or margin of profit.

The trade returns give the first item only. It will thus be seen by our correspondent that any attempt to reach a conclusion from the published value of the first cost of imports and the invoice price of exports omits from consideration so many and such important factors that the result really leaves the person obtaining it as much in the dark as ever.

In another article the Colonist will present some other phases of this very important subject, which is, as our correspondent says, one of the greatest possible interest to the people of Canada.

SCRIPTURAL INSPIRATION.

The inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is a theme that will ever be of interest, for although very much more importance is attached to it than it deserves, it touches every man in Christendom to some degree, for even those, who do not profess to order their lives according to the teachings of the Bible, are not wholly unconcerned in regard to it. Few people now claim the Scriptures to be inspired to the extent held by some of the old divines, who used to claim that every word and every letter was as it came from the lips of the All-wise. The difficulties in the way of accepting such a claim are obvious. As has been pointed out, the only object of an infallible inspiration is the infallible instruction of mankind. Hence unless with infallible inspiration we have infallible composition, infallible preservation, infallible interpretation, infallible explanation, and lastly infallible comprehension, the object is defeated. It is needless to say that we have not the last four requisites, for the most ancient MSS. differ in many respects, important or otherwise; there is doubt as to which MS. is to be regarded as the most authentic; translators differ in the rendition of many passages; theologians are at variance as to how much of it is to be expounded, and there is almost as much diversity as to how some passages are understood as there are minds to understand them. Hence if there was infallible inspiration and composition in the first place, it has proved to be of very little value—that is, the infallible phase of it.

Nevertheless this most wonderful compilation of writings must be regarded as an inspiration. The greatest difficulty in dealing with any subject is to get a correct definition to start with. Every one knows that Euclid begins his treatise on geomerty with certain definitions, and these, though exceedingly simple, are exact and self-evident. But the moment we leave the domain of mathematics we are confronted with an almost total absence of self-evident propositions. It is, however, self-evident that man exists. It is self-evident that man has at least a dual nature. It is self-evident that the phase of this dual nature which may be termed mental, as opposed to physical and including what are variously described as spiritual and moral attributes, is capable of development in two directions. It may be so developed that it will lead to misery, woe and the extinction of the human race, after passing through various degrees of degradation; or it may be developed in a direction which "makes for happiness" and the preservation and perfecting of mankind. Everyone will admit this as readily as that a whole is greater than its part, or that two straight lines cannot enclose a space. It will be admitted that there is in creation a definite plan or law. We think it will be also admitted as an axiom that what tends to the preservation and towards the perfecting of the race is in harmony with the plan of creation, and that influences working in the contrary direction are opposed to it. Another axiom is that every man is conscious of freedom of action. From these premises it may be fairly reasoned that if a person, exercising his freedom of will and seeking to work for the happiness of his fellows and the perfecting of his race, can find anywhere teachings, which direct him how best to accomplish these results, the source from which that teaching is obtained may be claimed to be in harmony with the plan of creation. It is axiomatic that truth must harmonize. There cannot be something true in the physical world that does not harmonize with something in the mental, moral or spiritual world. We may not be able to detect the harmony, but it must exist in the very nature of things. Hence what is true in every department of creation must have a common origin in the All-wise, the All-powerful, the Ever-present, or whatever it pleases you to call the dominating force in the Universe.

If this argument will stand examination, then it may be justly claimed that writings, which for many centuries have served as a guide for men who were working for the betterment of humanity, must contain teachings derived in some way from the dominating force of the Universe; in other words, the Bible contains the Word of God. It may contain something purely human, but so does the placer ground of the miner contain something else besides gold. The divine truth of the Scriptures can be found when it is sought for by those who wish to find it.

A CHURCH CRISIS.

No one, who has kept track of what has appeared in the British secular press during the last year, will think it overstating the case to say that the Church of England is almost at a crisis on the subject of ritualism. All the prominent papers treat the condition of affairs, which has arisen, as of extreme importance, and the language employed in the discussion discloses a heat of feeling that must result in radical measures of some kind. Among the commonest allegations are that the object of the ritualistic party is to place the English Church under the control of the Pope, and it is boldly asserted that a section of the English clergy is even now in the pay of that prelate. The bishops are endeavoring to pour oil on the troubled waters, but are meeting with about the same measure of success as Mrs. Partington did when she tried to sweep back the Atlantic ocean with her broom. The ritualistic clergy and their supporters are evidently determined to pursue the course, which is leading to the crisis, and the bulk of the laity and probably a large majority of the clergy are determined that the objectionable practices shall cease. If neither party will give way, the only resource left is to appeal to parliament, and to this it is almost certain to come.

For the information of those readers, who do not understand the exact position of the case, which makes the subject of ritualism one proper to be dealt with by parliament, it may be mentioned that in this country, where most of the English churches are supported by voluntary subscription, the clergyman may adapt his cermonial to his own wishes or those of his congregation, and the law cannot be invoked. In some cases, however, where certain grants of lands or bequests of property have been made for the support of churches wherein services shall be conducted in accordance with the forms adopted by the Church of England, the same question arises as in England, for in those cases the stipulation in the grant or the bequest creates a contract, or to express the mattter otherwise, it creates conditions upon which alone the property may be used. In one of the eastern provinces a suit was brought to restrain a rector from using the rental of certain glebe land on the ground that he was departing from the established forms of worship prescribed for the Church of England, and the court held that it was competent to inquire into the practices of the rector, and if he were found to be in the habit of departing from those forms to enjoin him from using the rental. The matter was subsequently adjusted by mutual concessions. There are, however, certain practices which cannot be dealt with by the courts, and hence parliament will possibly, and indeed very probably, be asked to step in and declare the law. Many of the church's best friends favor an application to parliament, because it may lead to the opening of the whole question of establishment. Earnest and conscientious men on both sides of the controversy regard the outlook as very portentous.

The degradation of General Miles, of the United States army, is a very extraordinary conclusion to a successful war, during which he was in full command of the forces. General Miles has always been more popular with the public than with the army. The fact that he was not a West Pointer tended to lead him to be regarded by the graduates of that institution as an intruder. He was a volunteer during the war of secession, serving with much credit, and afterwards made a good record for himself in campaigns against the Indians.

There is skating on the lake at the park, and a complaint reaches the Colonist that boys play hockey there to the danger and great discomfort of girls. This ought to be stopped. The lake, on the few occasions it is fit to skate on, should be kept free of hockey players. Boys can go elsewhere for this sport, but the girls who frequent the lake cannot do so as a rule. The park committee have only to say the word and the hockey playing will be stopped.

The Times wants to know if Victoria can fight the whole province. The answer is: No, and there is not the least necessity to contemplate such a thing, for before long the whole province will join with Victoria in repudiating Martinism.

On Thursday some one put in circulation a card, ostensibly in the interests of the opposition, but really intended to injure them on the Mainland. It called upon the voters of Victoria to oppose Joseph Martin, the Canadian Pacific and Vancouver. No authority was given by the opposition committee for the publication of any such card, which was the production of either some ill-advised friend or crafty enemy. We incline to think it was the latter.

Victoria's water famine might have had very serious results. It was a matter that could not have been guarded against, for no one ever anticipated the sort of accident which shut off the supply. Precautions can be taken in future that will avoid a repetition of it.

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