THE KILLING OF WEE DON.

A Visit to the Mill By Judge and Jury, After Hearing Many Witnesses.

The Prisoner to Tell His Story To-Day — Self-Defence is His Plea.

The Sayward mill fatality occupied the attention of the Assizes all yesterday, and the Court room was thronged with spectators from start to finish. The Chinese, of course, were very numerously represented, for they have been greatly interested in the case; and several of the Salvation Army friends of the prisoner were present in uniform to show their sympathy for him. The prisoner, Carruthers, appeared to feel his position very keenly. He was represented by W. J. Taylor and H. G. Hall, and entered the plea of not guilty. For the prosecution there appeared Hon. Theodore Davie, Q.C., the Attorney General; and P. Æ Irving, representing the friends of the deceased, Wee Don. When the Court rose all the evidence was in except that of the prisoner, who will be put in the box the first thing this morning. The jury empanelled, who spent last night in the sheriff's custody, but in comfortable quarters, is as follows:

Geo. Lyall (foreman), H. B. Rendall, Henry Hart, John G. Aden, John Weir, A. S. Felton, Chas. W. Rogers, Wm. Shaw, Wm. Gold, Graham Campbell, Walter C. Nathan and P. J. Hall.

Mr. Irving addressed the jury, recounting the circumstances of the fatal afternoon, that of the 6th November. The prisoner, Arthur Carruthers, and the deceased, Wee Don, were, he said, working at the Sayward mill, near the entrance, the deceased carrying out slabs and the prisoner piling them on carts to be taken away. What occurred was witnessed by only two persons, besides the two directly concerned. These persons were two Chinamen working in the mill not twenty feet away. They stated that they saw the prisoner strike Wee Don on the head as the deceased was stooping down to pick up a slab—the prisoner struck him with a slab which he held in both hands. The blow was struck on the left side, but the effect was most visible on the other, where there was a large clot of blood, and the base of the skull was fractured from one side to the other. Wee Don died within 18 hours.

Dr. E. B. C. Hanington, examined by Mr. Davie, testified to having been called on the 6th of November to attend Wee Don at 54 Fisgard street. He found the deceased perfectly unconscious, and on examination saw a puncture on the left side of the head, and an elevation, such as would be caused by a clot of blood, on the right. He considered that there was a fracture of the skull, and that the case was perfectly hopeless. He attended at the post mortem made by Dr. Jones, from which it appeared that the cause of death was the pressure of a clot of blood on the brain, due to a rupture of the artery which followed the fracture of the skull, or from a transmitted blow. The skull was fractured through from ear to ear. The injury inflicted was such as would have been caused by a blow from a blunt instrument.

Counsel having asked witness whether the injury might have been caused by a blow from a slab such as lay on the floor near him, and which counsel was about to exhibit, Mr. Taylor objected that the depositions already in showed that the slab with which the blow was struck had been placed on the cart and taken away. In consequence of this objection the slabs in court were not then exhibited.

The Chinese witnesses to be called not understanding English, Ah Wing was called by the Crown as interpreter. Mr. Taylor thereupon asked to have Rev. J. E. Gardner also sworn as interpreter, stating that he objected to Ah Wing on the ground that he had a leaning towards the prosecution and against the prisoner.

Hon. Mr. Davie said he felt perfectly sure that Ah Wing was a fair interpreter, otherwise he would not have been called.

His Lordship declined to have Rev. Mr. Gardner sworn, stating that he could not interfere one way or the other.

Rev. Mr. Gardner, without being sworn, then took a seat beside the counsel for the prisoner, and occasionally translated to them the replies of the witness.

Sing Wee was called and sworn in the Chinese fashion, writing his name on a piece of blue paper, which was then burned in his hand.

Mr. Taylor objected to this form of oath, on the ground that it is not binding in China, the witness admitting that the forms used there were beheading a chicken in court, or else writing the name of the witness on a piece of paper and burning it in the open air.

His Lordship asked the witness if the oath just taken was binding on his conscience, and what would happen if after taking it he did not tell the truth.

Witness replied that the oath would compel him to tell the truth or else that some idol would punish him.

His Lordship said this was quite sufficient to make the evidence admissible.

Sing Wee testified that he worked at "the big sawmill on the way to Esquimalt." At the same place Wee Don was working, sending out slabs, which came from upstairs, to the prisoner, who would put the slabs on the wagons. He saw Wee Don near the prisoner, stooping down to pick up the slabs, and he saw the white boy (the prisoner) strike Wee Don, who was stooping down, with a slab. The boy held the slab in both hands when he struck, with his left hand in front. The slab was about four feet long, as wide as the hand of the witness, and about half as thick. One of the sticks in court being produced, witness said the one with which the blow was struck was like it. The stick was then passed to the jury for their inspection. When Wee Don was struck he fell down on his face. Witness went up to him and said, "Did the boy strike you?" but there was no answer, and so he called Wee Don's cousin, Ah Lay. Witness was working ten or twelve feet away, shovelling sawdust, and was facing Wee Don.

Cross-examined by Mr. Taylor, witness said he had not told his boss, Mr. Moller, after the affair, that the two men had been fighting.

Ah Sang was called and sworn in the same way as the former witness. His competency to give evidence under oath was also objected to by Mr. Taylor, and considerable difficulty was experienced in making him state whether or not an oath was binding upon him. To Mr. Taylor he answered that he did not know what an oath was, but His Lordship then put a series of questions, in answer to which he said he understood that if he told lies he would be punished hereafter.

Mr. Taylor objected to the way in which the interpreter had put the questions as he said he was informed by Mr. Gardner that the interpreter had said to the witness: "Do you believe that you will go to hell if you tell a lie?" The interpreter denied this: "We have no word for that," he said, "our people not know where the hell is or where the heaven is, so of course I don't say that." His Lordship said Ah Sang appeared to be a competent witness, and his examination was then proceeded with by Mr. Irving.

Witness said he worked at the same mill as Sing Wee, the prisoner and the dead man. On the 6th of November he saw the prisoner strike Wee Don with a stick something like the one produced in court; he saw him strike only once; the prisoner walked around a low pile of slabs and struck Wee Don, who was stooping down on the other side; Wee Don fell on his face and Sing Wee went up to him.

Cross examined by Mr. Taylor, witness said he did not see Wee Don strike the prisoner on the leg, or hear any words between them. There was great noise in the mill, so he could not have heard much. He went on with his work and did not know whether or not Mr. Moller, his boss, came to look at Wee Don. The cross examination was in progress when at one o'clock the court adjourned for one hour. Upon reassembling of court, the witness said he did not see Wee Don with an edging in his hand try to strike the prisoner.

Dr. O. M. Jones, surgeon, testified that he had made the post-mortem examination of the body of the deceased. He stated that pressure of a clot of blood on the brain was the direct cause of death. The skull was fractured clear across the base. Such an injury might be caused by a blow from any blunt instrument. The body was well nourished, and all the other organs were perfectly healthy, without signs of violence.

Ah Lay was called and examined by Mr. Davie, after Mr. Taylor had repeated his objection to the validity of the oath administered. Witness said he worked at the sawmill carrying lumber. On the afternoon of the 6th November, Sing Wee called him and he went and saw Wee Don lying on the ground with his face down. He saw the prisoner putting slabs on the wagon. Witness picked up Wee Don, put him alongside of the house, put his hat on and went for the foreman, who followed him to the place. The prisoner was there. The foreman looked at him and said, "It is only a little on the skin, nothing much." Witness then went to his work. In half an hour he came back to Wee Don and took him up to the office and asked for the time check. Wee Don walked a few steps and then said he could not walk any farther, so witness "packed" him home, and some time later went for Dr. Harrington.

In cross-examination by Mr. Taylor, witness said when he went to the foreman he did not say that Wee Don was hurt fighting, but he said that the boy had struck him.

At three o'clock the court adjourned for the purpose of visiting Sayward's mill, so that the jury and all concerned might inspect the scene of the tragedy.

Wee Gong was put into the box, but as it could not be made plain without a lengthy process that he understood the nature of an oath, Hon. Mr. Davie said he would not trouble with his examination.

Chief Henry W. Sheppard, of the city police, gave the particulars of the arrest of the prisoner, which he made at the Salvation Army hall on the evening of the 6th. When he arrested Carruthers, they were by themselves in the hallway outside the meeting room. He stated the charge, which then was that of striking with intent to do grievous bodily harm, and Carruthers said: "I struck him on the head; he struck me first." Witness then cautioned prisoner, telling him that the doctor said the Chinaman would die. On the way to the lock-up, after this, the accused said: the Chinaman threw a slab and struck him on the leg; he threw another and struck the Chinaman on the leg; then the Chinaman made towards him with a slab and to defend himself he struck the Chinaman. He said he had not thought that the hurt was so bad that the Chinaman would die. When the man died, at noon the next day, witness told the prisoner, who seemed very much "out up," but said nothing. Witness then formally charged him with murder.

This closed the case for the Crown.

Mr. Taylor then opened the case for the defence by an address to the jury, in which he said he would introduce evidence to show the good character of the accused, and his peaceable disposition. He proposed to put the accused upon the stand to give his own version. This would show, he thought, that the deceased Chinaman had been rather careless in his work, and it seemed often thrown the slabs so that they struck the prisoner on the leg or on the hand. On this day it seems that he had been so struck and losing his temper had thrown a slab back. The deceased had then picked up a stick and advanced towards the prisoner, who, having in his hand a slab which he had intended to put on the cart, stood with it raised up ready to defend himself. When the Chinaaman continued to come towards him he was forced to strike to defend himself, and in striking he had no other intention. The result was most unfortunate and altogether unlooked for. He held that the testimony of the Chinese witnesses was utterly untrustworthy, and that the doctor's evidence showed that the deceased could not have been struck when stooping down as described. He exhibited a photograph of the mill premises to show that the Chinaman who said he saw the blow struck was in such a position that he could not possibly see. It seemed reasonable that when the Chinaman was struck on the head he had fallen, and had then experienced the shock which fractured the skull.

John Henry Nolan, the foreman and tally-man at the Sayward mill, was examined by Mr. Taylor. He said that on the 6th the previous witness, Ah Lay, called him, saying that Wee Don had been hurt. Wee Don pointed to the prisoner as the man who had hurt him. He and Ah Lay moved the injured man a few feet, to the light, and examined his head. Prisoner had in the meantime driven off on the cart. He had first said that the Chinaman threw a stick at him and he had to defend himself. Witness did not think the wound was anything serious, as there was no mark but only a faint color of blood under the queue. Wee Don afterwards walked up to the office supported by Ah Lay. The prisoner was of a quiet disposition. Ah Lay had been with the mill quite a number of years, and understood English pretty well. Witness told Ah Lay that the wound was not much, and he understood him.

H. E. Moller, dealer in slab wood, was examined by Mr. Taylor. He said the prisoner Carruthers had been working for him since June, and was of a quiet, inoffensive disposition. When he arrived at the mill, about 5:30 p.m. on the 6th, he heard there had been a fight, and examined Wee Don, who was not able to get up.

William Dawson, who works for Mr. Moller, said he had always found Carruthers a quiet, inoffensive person. The deceased, Wee Don, was very careless in throwing the slabs so that they would hit on the legs anyone loading the carts. He had himself often been so hit by the same Chinaman.

Anson E. Soper, who worked for Mr. Moller until the 16th of October, gave similar evidence as to the two men.

Theophilus Elford said prisoner had worked for him for a considerable time, and had proved good tempered under adverse circumstances.

The court adjourned at 5:20 p.m. until 10 o'clock this morning.

Disagreement and discharge of the jury after eight hours' consideration of the evidence, was the result of the two days' trial of Arthur Carruthers for the killing of Wee Don. The court room and gallery were densely packed all yesterday, and several lady members of the Salvation Army occupied seats inside the rail. The jury were asked by the Crown to find the prisoner guilty of simply manslaughter, the evidence not pointing to murder as charged in the indictment.

Arthur Carruthers, the prisoner, was put in the box at the opening of the court, and told his story very frankly, being much affected during its recital. He said that he was nearly 21 years of age. On the afternoon in question while they were working Wee Don brought out a heavy slab and threw it down so that it almost fell on his foot. He stepped up on the pile to be out of the way, but said nothing. The next armful the Chinaman brought he put them down properly, but after that he came with several small edgings which he threw down so that they almost hit witness in the face and did strike his legs. Witness had two or three edgings in his hands, and he threw them easily at Wee Don, who was stooping down at the time, and struck him on the legs. Wee Don exclaimed "What for!" and turning round ran up on the pile, with two small edgings in his hands, towards witness. "I picked up an edging," he continued; "Wee Don looked very angry, and I saw he intended to strike me. I struck him then. I saw plainly by his looks that he intended to injure me and I was scared. He was facing me with his head turned a little to the right. When I struck him he was standing there, not running. He fell backwards inside. I did not think that he was seriously hurt, but when he fell I thought his senses had been knocked out of him, that's all. I thought I must have struck harder than I intended." Witness proceeded to describe how the Chinaman from inside picked up Wee Don and placed him on a seat, and stated that after Mr. Nolan came up and said something witness told him, "I struck the Chinaman because he came outside with a stick to strike me." Witness drove away on his cart, still not thinking that the Chinaman was seriously hurt.

Cross-examined by Mr. Davie, the witness said Wee Don had frequently before, through carelessness, thrown the slabs so that they struck him. He showed on the photographs of the mill which had been produced during the trial, the position of the Chinaman and his own during the affair, and how he had struck the blow; in doing this he held up the edging with his left hand, and in answer to question said he was left-handed.

W. T. Taylor then addressed the jury on behalf of the accused. He contended that the testimony of the Chinese witnesses was palpably false and that the form of oath administered was not considered by them as at all binding. The medical evidence showed that the deceased had been struck on the side of the head, just as described by the accused when he went into the box, and not on the back of the head as both the Chinese witnesses had sworn. The exact similarity of their stories showed that the testimony of these witnesses was manufactured for the effect it was supposed to have in court. The accused had clearly acted in self-defence, for the threatening attitude of the Chinaman was such that it was a case of knocking out or being knocked. The intention with which the blow was struck was the all-important fact, and everything went to show that the accused had no intention of even seriously hurting the Chinaman, let alone of killing him. He called attention to the frankness with which the accused had told his story when he had gone into the witness box, taking advantage of the recent change in the law, which now gave accused persons the privilege of thus stating the facts, and held that his whole demeanor was that of innocence rather than of guilt. The weapon used was not what would ordinarily be called a dangerous one, and was not deliberately chosen with a view to hurt, but the edging was properly in the hand of the accused, and was naturally used when he was attacked. He asked for a verdict of acquittal, as the evidence showed neither murder, as charged, nor manslaughter, but only justifiable homicide.

Hon. Theodore Davie, Q.C., Attorney-General, presented the case for the Crown. The prisoner, he said, was indicted for murder, because in law all homicide is presumed to be murder until otherwise shown. He thought, however, that the jury might at once dismiss from their minds any suggestion of this being an act of wilful murder, or even one of manslaughter such as would call for imprisonment for life, but it did call for some punishment. He thought it was a dreadful contention to set up on behalf of the prisoner to say that he should be altogether acquitted because the blow he struck was harder than he intended. The prisoner was responsible for the death of this Chinaman as the result of an intentional design on his part to hurt Wee Don. It appeared that nearly the same thing—the careless throwing of the slabs—had happened before without serious results, but on this occasion the prisoner had chosen to resent it in the manner stated. There were two stories of how this occurred. One was told by the two Chinamen, who, from the testimony of the prisoner himself, were in a position to see what they said they saw. They both described a left-handed blow, which was not what would be expected, but this was confirmed by the prisoner himself, who had stated in the box to-day that he was a left-handed man, and had wielded the edging in court just as the Chinese witnesses declared he had at the mill. The prisoner said: "I thought I knocked the senses out of him, that's all," but was not that enough? Was it to be admitted that a man could strike another a blow, with a heavy weapon, severe enough to knock him senseless, and then be acquitted if the blow happened to kill? The theory of self-defence was demolished by the prisoner's own evidence, for he said himself that when he struck Wee Don was standing still, about four feet away from him. This little Chinaman, for so he was described, was coming at him not at all in a dangerous way, for he was loaded with two sticks which he had picked up, not to strike the prisoner with, but to place upon the pile. The prisoner was an able-bodied man, accustomed to hard work all his life, and would be a formidable antagonist, but the Chinaman of whom he said he was scared was a pusillanimous little fellow, who could be knocked over with scarcely any effort. The prisoner might easily have closed with the Chinaman and taken the sticks away from him if necessary. He maintained that a case of manslaughter had been clearly made out, and called for some punishment; whether small or great was for the judge to determine. The fact that the deceased was a Chinaman should make no difference. Whether or not we liked their presence here, the Chinamen were while resident in this British country entitled to just as much protection to their lives and property as other citizens receive. He asked the jury to remember that there are in China to-day a few thousand of their fellow countrymen who are at the absolute mercy of hundreds of millions of Chinamen, and it would be a terrible thing if the Chinese should get the idea that their lives were not protected in this British community and should retaliate on the British subjects in their territories.

His Lordship, Mr. Justice Walkem, in summing up the case introduced his remarks by imploring the jury not to disgrace the jury room by introducing into it the street arab sayings, "Oh! a Chinaman's life is like a dog's!" "What is a Chinaman's oath?" and other remarks of that sort. During thirty years' practice in this Province he had constantly heard such contemptuous remarks about the oath of a Chinaman, an Indian or a Hindoo. It was a maxim of British law, however, that any form of oath believed to be binding on a man's conscience was entitled to respect, and he saw no reason to suppose that the Chinese witnesses here were not quite competent to testify. The fact that it was "only a Chinaman" who had been killed should make no difference, for the law recognized no social distinctions, and a Chinaman was entitled to just as much protection as any white man, for his life and his property, even down to his rags. He reviewed the circumstances leading up to the killing, as shown by the evidence. The Chinaman's testimony was probably not all correct, but who, seeing an occurrence like this, would notice or remember all or many of the details. Their evidence, however, was not so very material, for the prisoner in his statement said that he did strike the blow, and the man he struck is dead. The young fellow gave his evidence very frankly, and he deserved credit for it. He had told that the Chinaman had come up with two edgings much lighter than the one in court, and they must have been of the lathy character, and therefore not formidable weapons. He plainly did not go up on the pile to take the life of the prisoner, otherwise he would have seized one heavy stick instead of two small ones. If the prisoner had been then struck by the Chinaman, even lightly, he would have asked for an acquittal, but under the circumstances stated he asked the jury to treat the case as they thought would be just. The prisoner had given a blow which was unwarranted, and should the jury find that manslaughter had thus been committed, the responsibility for the punishment would then be with the judge. Should they, on the other hand, find the prisoner not guilty, it would be his pleasure to grant an acquittal.

The jury retired at 12:40, but before going out one of the jurors asked a question as to which chute the witness Sing Wee was standing at. His Lordship answered that that had not been made quite clear, and the jury would have to put the best interpretation they could on what had been stated.

Hon. Mr. Davie announced that at the conclusion of this case he would ask for an adjournment of the court until the 6th of December. The Stroebel murder trial will then betaken up.

The jury came into court at 3.10 to ask for a copy of the prisoner's statement. His Lordship said there was no authorized copy, but read over to them the very complete notes he had himself taken, which seemed satisfactory, and they again retired to their room. At 4.15, no verdict having been arrived at, the court was adjourned for an hour. At 5.15 the jury were called in, and the foreman announced that they had not yet agreed. One of the jurors then asked if they might have read over to them the doctrine of self-defence as previously read by prisoner's counsel and by the Attorney-General.

His Lordship said it was no doubt the quoted principle of "repelling force by force" of which the explanation was desired, and this he would readily give, as it was from the judge that the jury were to take their law. He proceeded to make it clear that a man is justified in using sufficient force for his own safety and no more—that the force of a child, for instance, should not be repelled by the force of a man. They would have to consider in this case whether or not undue force was used. He expressed the hope that they would not fail to arrive at a verdict, and thus put the Crown—that is, the public—to the expense and trouble of a new trial. The case seemed to his mind very clear and simple. He had not expressed his whole mind upon it, because he did not wish to take from them the responsibility which they should bear, but he hoped they would not do anything which would bring into disfavor the system by which the jury was made the representative of society, to stand between the accused and the Crown. The responsibility lay with him to determine, if the prisoner were found guilty, whether the punishment awarded should be a month or a year or any other period. In conclusion, he urged that they should try the case just as if it had been a white laborer who was killed. As he thought a verdict ought to be reached very soon, he would give them until six o'clock before adjourning the court.

At six o'clock the jury were asked, in their room, whether they were about to agree, and upon their answering in the negative His Lordship adjourned the court until eight o'clock, intimating that if there were no verdict then he might have to lock them up for the night.

At 8 o'clock the court again met. The jury having entered, the foreman announced that they had not agreed, and that there was very little chance of agreement.

His Lordship expressed disappointment at this intimation. He felt unwilling, he said, to put the public to the expense of another trial, without any reasonable cause. The case appeared to him to be a simple one. He noticed that he had been inadvertently misreported as saying that he would "have" to be satisfied with a particular verdict. The impression he wished to convey was that the responsibility of the verdict was solely with the jury, and that, having left the matter as he had entirely to their discretion, without direction, either way, he was bound to be satisfied with any decision at which they conscientiously arrived. His whole endeavor had been to make their minds clear as to what value might properly be attached to the evidence. If they did not care to accept the Chinese statements, then they could base a verdict upon the man's own testimony. He would ask them to retire for twenty minutes, in which time he thought they ought to reach a conclusion. If there were extenuating circumstances, they ought to leave them to be considered by the judge. If the case were the converse of the present—if the poor young fellow in the dock were in his grave and the Chinaman were here on trial—he did not think the jury would be out five minutes.

The jury again retired as directed. At 8:40 they were called into court, and the foreman announced that they were no nearer a unanimous conclusion than before.

His Lordship said that they having been out nearly eight hours without result, it would probably be useless to lock them up for the night. He did not wish to make the matter a physical test, in which the weaker members would be compelled to yield to the stronger, so he would discharge them. Of course there would have to be a new trial, with the whole proceedings gone over again. He left it to the Attorney-General to say when that trial should be.

The court then adjourned till 10 a.m. on the 6th of December, when the Stroebel murder case will be taken up.

The sentence of three months' imprisonment imposed, on the first day of the assizes, on George Ellery, for unlawfully having in his possession and cruelly killing Mr. Boscowitz' valuable retriever, and which sentence was, on application of counsel for the accused, not then recorded pending evidence as to the state of his health, was yesterday reduced by Mr. Justice Walkem to one month. His Lordship stated that he had been influenced by the interposition of the Attorney-General on the prisoner's behalf, and also by the pleadings of the man's friends. He adhered to all he had said in the first instance as to the punishment which such cruel conduct deserved.

THE MIDWINTER FAIR.

To the Editor:—Although the visit of Col. Sharp, representative of the Midwinter Fair, was a brief one, our citizens cannot but be interested in the project. Many people were hindered, no doubt, from attending the meeting on Friday evening on account of the inclemency of the weather. All who were present were, no doubt, pleased to hear of the success of the enterprise so far. This shows what can be done even by a few when they enter upon their work inearnest. A fair such as is proposed to be held at San Francisco from the 1st of January to the 30th of June of next year, cannot fail to be of great importance to the people of this Province, as well as a boon to the whole Pacific Coast. The advantages to British Columbia of participating in the Exhibition are many. The products of our mines, I am sure, would be of great interest and would compare favorably with those of the neighboring states and of California, where there are so many persons interested in mining.

Then we have our lumber, coal, fish and other products, to which we often refer with pride. These would, I am sure, be favorably brought into competition and be worthy of inspection by the large number of people who will visit the fair. There is another point which should induce us to take a special interest in the Midwinter Fair—the fact that it is to be held on the Pacific Coast—and whatever of interest or benefit it is to California, so it is to British Columbia. The most prominent of these reasons is the fact that many who are coming to the Midwinter Fair are coming to stay. Those who are so bent will find that new fields are presenting themselves for those who are looking for investments. New sections are being opened for the agriculturist; new mines are being developed, and other industries are being commenced as the country advances and is settled up. All this is compatible with a new country like ours, and to me it seems that a midwinter fair, such as the one proposed to be held in San Francisco, will revolutionize matters in this particular to an astonishing degree.

The fact that the management of the fair have secured cheap fares is going to induce a large number to travel, and at a time of the year when those living in the East can easily leave home, and at the same time will be able to see the country on the West of the continent when it is at its best. In doing so the majority will come, no doubt, with the intention of spying out the land and inspecting the products of the soil. One might enlarge upon the subject, but sufficient is shown to prove that we should not neglect the opportunity of making an exhibit at the Midwinter International Exposition.

I am glad to hear that the Board of Trade are going to take steps in the direction of urging upon the Governments and the other cities in the Province to unite in making a good display. It would be well, if the Government saw fit, to have the present exhibit at Chicago removed to San Francisco before it is sent to England. The advantage of such an exhibit would do much to place before the public the richness of our mines and other resources. As the exhibition opens on the first of January next, no time should be lost. It is to be hoped the press, which is always a powerful lever, will take up the cause and urge the necessity of immediate action, so that an exhibit worthy of our Province may be sent to the Midwinter Fair.

G. L. Milne, M.D.

THE LABOR CONFERENCE.

To the Editor:—I observe in your report of the delegates of the various labor unions, who responded to the Government's invitation to be present at the Labor Conference, held in the Board of Trade rooms, Victoria, on the 25th inst., that Wellington was represented by one S. D. Jones, of the M. and M. B. P. A. of V. I. Allow me to state, sir, that the report quoted above was the first intimation the body of workingmen of Wellington had of there being any organization of that character in their midst, or that any person by the name of S. D. Jones works or resides at or near Wellington. Such being the case, I am but making public the opinion of a large number of Wellington workmen, in stating that some mistake must have been made in the representation. From the manner in which the Government thought proper to deal with the question under consideration, it is to be inferred that they could not see their way clear to extend their invitation to non-unionists, or that they (the Government) think that class of laborers have no views on, or interest in, the subject at issue to ventilate or defend. The misrepresentation above noted must be my apology for intruding on your space. J. B. Hugo,

Wellington, November 23.

A CORRECTION.

To the Editor:—By to-night's Times I read that as the reporters were not admitted to the conference on Saturday night that paper is unable to give but a synopsis of the proceedings. The Times states that Mr. Davie strenuously objected to reporters being present, and that the workingmen were unanimous for their admittance. Now, Mr. Editor, if the person who played spy told the truth he would have said that three or four of the delegates spoke in favor of not having reporters present, and some members of the conference upheld them in the stand they were taking, as they thought with Mr. Davie that it would be as well not to admit reporters so as not to give the meeting the semblance of being political. At the close it was thought advisable not to publish anything at all about the meeting, but it seems that the Times does not have to depend at all on their public reporters as they are able to find a way of getting news anyhow.

Signed, Delegate.

For pity's sake, don't growl and grumble because you are troubled with indigestion. No good was ever effected by snarling and fretting. Be a man (unless you happen to be a woman), and take Ayer's Sarsaparilla, which will relieve you, whether man or woman.

THE DARK CONTINENT.

An Interesting Description by a Lecturer Many Years Resident There.

British Columbia a Better Country and Folks Here Warned Against Migrating.

There was a good attendance at the James Bay Methodist schoolroom last evening to hear Mr. Jos. Peirson's "talk" on "Life in South Africa." Rev. E. Robson, pastor of the church, occupied the chair, and after singing and the Lord's Prayer introduced the speaker, who first referred to the early exploration of the coast of Africa, describing the beautiful scenery witnessed. The speaker had resided for years in Natal, where he operated in farming and stock-raising. Farming in Natal is a rather uncertain occupation, where irrigation cannot be secured, except as regards the growth of maize, which does well. The climate is fairly good, and generally healthful after the inconvenience of the local fever has been passed and the settler becomes "salted" or acclimatized.

In some districts the native tribes have been crowded to the wall by white colonists. This is especially true of the Bushmen and Hottentots, the former of whom are about the meanest specimens of the native races, and the latter among the best. South Africa is a group of colonies differing largely. From five acres in the diamond fields $350,000,000 worth have been taken. South Africa should be called the "ladies' country" on account of the gold, diamonds and ostrich feathers produced there, of all which the ladies are very fond.

The labor market is well supplied, and the Hottentots and Zulus are fairly good workers if treated kindly and the employers fulfil their promises to them. One pound per month is about the maximum wage for native laborers, boys, or beginners, receiving three to four shillings and working up. It costs about £1 per month additional to provision the laborer, making the total cost, say $10 per month. In the mining regions wages are much higher, and so are provisions, butter, for instance, fetching $1 per pound. But even there the labor market is supplied. Though, in instances, carpenters may receive $4, or even $5, per day, there are not many of them required, as the houses are generally of a very inexpensive, and indeed primitive style. During the six years the speaker had resided in Natal, he had not used fire for the sake of warming more than half a dozen times. Snow is scarcely ever seen, and he had known to be organized to go many miles to the nearest mountain, after a snowfall, to have the rare pleasure of a game of snow-balling. The clothing of Zulu laborers is very simple. A long sack inverted, with a hole in the bottom for the neck and a slit in each side for the arms, makes a capital suit. The dresses of females in the towns is simple and rather neat, but in the rural districts it is almost, if not quite, nature unadorned. In a native house, shaped like a round beehive with a low small door thirty men will sleep in a circle, all the feet around the centre pole. The introduction of European drink and other vile customs has done much to degrade and destroy the aborigines. At first settlers could implicitly trust the honesty of the natives; not so now. They can lie and steal like other folks. The speaker gave an amusing description of a native smoking party. The people are hospitable; the chief man drinking first and then passing around the calabash. They make good servants in the kitchen. The Kaffirs wash the clothes in streams beating them on stones and mangle them by treading them under their feet.

The Zulus are powerful and brave warriors as was illustrated in the terrible disaster at Isandulah and Rourke's Drift when the English troops, and among them the Prince Imperial of France, were cut off by Cetywayo's soldiers. With the brother of that king Dabulamanza, the speaker became acquainted, after the war was over, and an interesting anecdote was related of him and his people, showing the gratitude of these natives when kindness is shown them. The tragical events of the war were referred to and criticisms made upon the colonial policy of the Government of that day, which had inflicted great injustice upon Sir Bartle Frere, the British Commissioner, and Lord Chelmsford, commander of the forces, who would have brought the war to an end much sooner had he been left untrammeled. The period after the war was one of great gain to those farmers who could furnish oxen and waggons for Government service, as much as £400 per month being paid to one individual. The telegraph connecting with England and good colonial roads also soon followed. The speaker then briefly referred to the Boer war, and condemned the surrender of the Transvaal under the then existing circumstances.

During the course of the lecture occasion was taken to warn British Columbians from embarking upon schemes of emigration to South Africa. British Columbia, he said, is a good country to live in, and the money spent in going to Africa would tide one over any period of depression here. It would be an unpleasant thing to be dumped upon the coast of Africa without money or friends or employment. The speaker had received a letter only ten days ago advising him that there were many there now unable to secure work. There was considerable sentiment about the way in which people in England invested their money in African enterprises.

The address was listened to with close attention, and the speaker resumed his seat amid general applause. A hearty vote of thanks was awarded, upon motion of Mr. Geo. Powell, and the meeting closed with the singing of the National Anthem, the Chairman thanking the audience for their presence, and intimating that a course of monthly lectures had been determined upon for the winter season, the next to take place in December.

Dr. Eberts, of Wellington, arrived from California with his bride, last evening.

GILLETT'S
PURE POWDERED 100%
LYE
PUREST, STRONGEST, BEST.
Ready for use in any quantity. For making Soap Softening Water, Disinfecting, and a hundred other uses. 1 can equals 20 pounds Sal Soda.
Sold by All Grocers and Druggists.
E. W. GILLETT, Toronto.
ttsa