The Colonist.

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THE SITUATION IN THE STATES.

The campaign in the United States is progressing vigorously. There are now four parties in the field, the Republicans, the Silver Democrats, the Populists, and the Gold Democrats. The Republicans are closely united, they have a splendid organization and a candidate who is unusually popular. Mr. McKinley is personally a most estimable man, and his principles are from first to last strictly Republican. It is, therefore, no wonder that he is popular with his own party, and that he is acceptable to sound money Democrats, who, though not subscribing to the Republican creed, have made up their minds to vote for the Republican candidate, because he is sound on the money question, and is a man who can be relied upon to maintain the honor of the nation.

The Silver Democrats are a section of the old Democratic party which has formed a union, though not a very close one, with the Populist party. The candidates of the Silver Democrats chosen at the Chicago Convention are Bryan and Sewall. The Populists held a convention at St. Louis and nominated Bryan their candidate for the office of President and Watson for Vice-President.

The Gold Democrats, who are composed of the best elements of the old Democratic party, held their convention the other day at Indianapolis and nominated General Palmer for President and General Buckner for Vice-President.

The success of Bryan, as our readers know, has been phenomenal. When the Convention met at Chicago he was known to but a comparatively few of his own party. No one on the first day of the Convention would have dreamed of his being a possible candidate for the Presidency. But he made a speech which "electrified" the Convention and when he sat down it was evident that he and none but he would be the choice of the Convention. He was nominated. And, so far, he has more than realized the most sanguine hopes of the men who nominated him. He is a most effective speaker. He has confirmed thousands of silver men in their faith in the virtues of the white metal, and he has made converts of thousands more who were not settled in their convictions. He is violently and virulently opposed, but the very bitterness of the Opposition he has raised is evidence that he has made a deep impression on the electorate. There is nothing profound or logical in his speeches, but he is fervent and earnest, and tells his audiences what they want to hear; and that, for immediate effect, is all that is needed. The man who agrees with the crowd and says well and boldly what they would like to say if they were able, is, they are ready to declare, a man of great ability and uncommon eloquence. What he says is the solid truth, and there is no use in arguing against it. This seems to be the position which Bryan holds in the Western and Southern States, and in many places in the East, where multitudes heard him gladly.

Bryan's unparalleled success alarmed the Republicans and filled the Gold Democrats with consternation. The success of such a man and the crowd who who support and cheer him means, they verily believe, ruin to the United States. In order to deprive him of the support of that part of the Democratic party which worships the name Democrat, and would vote for the candidate of that party, no matter who or what he was or who was behind him, the Gold Democrats held their convention and appointed their candidates. It is believed that almost every vote cast for Palmer will be a vote taken from Bryan. Palmer has no hope to win; but if he takes large numbers of votes from Bryan, McKinley's chances of being elected will be increased.

It is, however, not all smooth sailing for Bryan. Mr. Sewall, who is associated on the ticket with him, being a capitalist and a Democrat of the old-fashioned type, is not popular with the Populists; whereas Watson, who is one of their own sort, is highly esteemed by them and there are many Populists who are displeased with Bryan because he does not repudiate the "gold-bug" Sewall and throw in his lot with Tom Watson. Bryan himself has not been very decided in the matter. He has not cast Sewall off, neither has he taken Watson by the hand. With either dear charmer he would have been happy, but he does not seem to know what in the world to do with them both. Sewall has magnanimously written to Bryan to cast him adrift if he thinks that his (Bryan's) chances of success will be increased by so doing, but we have not seen whether or not he has taken his Democratic colleague at his word.

Bryan's opponents are now saying that he is losing his popularity and that McKinley's election is sure, but as they would say that under any circumstances, it is difficult to decide how much truth there is in it. This, however, is certain; Bryan has proved and is proving a far more formidable antagonist than any one imagined he would be, and it will take all the strength of the believers in a sound currency to defeat him. It is folly at this time of day to under-rate the man or to minify his chances of success.

A SLOW PROCESS.

The Hon. Mr. Laurier does not appear to be making such rapid progress in conciliating Manitoba as he some time ago led the country to expect. Manitoba, or rather its Government, still holds back. It is evident that the majority of that Government are not as well disposed to close with Mr. Laurier's conciliatory offers as some of its members are. It is significant that the Government of the Province met the other day and not a word was said about the school question—we presume officially, for it is very improbable that the Manitoba Executive Council should meet and part at this particular time without anything being said about the "negotiations" that have been lately the subject of so much talk and so many conjectures. No doubt the members were all sounded on the subject and those of them who had enjoyed opportunities of finding out the state of public opinion relative to Mr. Laurier's conciliatory advances were eagerly questioned. At any rate the question is at present in Manitoba exactly where it has been for many a long day. It is not likely that the people will be content to be ignored in this matter of settling the school question. Although, as Mr. Sifton remarked, "there is no referendum in Manitoba," the people will find means to let the Government know that the promises made and the assurances given them with respect to the schools cannot be forgotten or disregarded by the Government with impunity.

Mr. Laurier, too, has a very difficult part to play in this matter. He has to steer his way between two very different sets of promises and pledges—those made in Ontario and those made in Quebec. Whether or not he will get out of the very unpleasant position in which he has placed himself without suffering shipwreck, it is at this moment difficult to say. He is, however, a dexterous steersman and if it is possible to satisfy his supporters in Ontario and his compatriots in Quebec by smooth speeches and pleasant-sounding compliments, he will get through without suffering much damage. But there are indications that both in Ontario and in Quebec the Liberals are looking for something more solid and substantial than mere talk. The Manitobans are at last beginning to see that the assurances that they would not be interfered with, that they would be left to manage their school affairs in such a way as in their opinion is best suited to their circumstances, were nothing more than mere election palaver. They find that they are not being left alone, that the Laurier Government is not pursuing the promised policy of non-interference, but that the members of the Government are being tampered with in a way that is really more objectionable and more dangerous to them than direct, open and undisguised coercion.

NEARING THE END.

The indications are that the cup of the Sultan's iniquity is full, and that the day of his downfall is at hand. He has outraged the feelings of the Christian world too long. The people have borne as long as they could the inaction of Governments. They consider, and rightly, too, that greater forbearance really means complicity in the evil deeds of the Turkish Government. The British Government has at last spoken out plainly, and has told the Sultan that an end must be put to government by massacre. Lord Salisbury apparently has not waited to make sure of the co-operation of the other great Powers before he took action. He had deferred to them too long. He had allowed considerations of policy to stand in the way of his obeying the dictates of humanity so long that the Sultan considered that he might treat the Armenians and other Christians in his dominions as cruelly as he pleased without fear of the interference of Christian nations. But he has now found that there is a limit to the forbearance of Christian peoples and that if he desires to retain his seat on the Turkish throne he must treat his Christian subjects with justice and humanity.

It is not known as yet how the change is to be brought about, but it seems to be certain that the Sultan will be obliged to make it speedily or, if he hesitates or refuses, it will be effected without him or in spite of his opposition.

POPULISM IN 1786.

Populism is not altogether new in the United States. In the present movement to debase the currency and to invent a new way to pay old debts history in that country is repeating itself. Between the years 1783 and 1787 the young republic was convulsed with an agitation that threatened to destroy it utterly. The people in many of the States believed it was in the power of government to create money—to make it out of nothing—and in this way help both the State and the individual citizen to get clear of their monetary obligations. Mr. Chauncey Ford, in a history of that critical time, says:

The belief was urged that the Legislature could create wealth by calling strips of paper, money. The experiences which the States had just passed through in the Revolution should have warned them against embarking on so dangerous a course. Yet a fever for paper money was engendered in every State and in all but a few New England States did it rage so powerfully as to carry all before it and again involve the credit of the States in the distrust from which it was just emerging. The scarcity of specie, the presence of debt, and the burden of taxation offered ready excuses for resorting to bills of credit.

It was found that this paper money without anything substantial at the back of it was not regarded by the people as worth much, and as time progressed it became of less and less value Other devices were resorted to to enable debtors to get rid of their obligations easily. "When paper was not issued," we are told, "land or commodities was made a legal tender. Such a law in South Carolina became known as the 'barren law,' because debtors would tender to their creditors the poorest and most worthless land of their holdings."

The circulation of the worthless paper money was enjoined by law.

"A creditor had no alternative; he must take the paper, no matter what its value might be, or forfeit his claim. Severe penalties were levelled against such persons as should not receive it at its face value, or express their preference for silver. Business transactions were at a standstill, for the confidence of man in man was destroyed. Prices of all articles rose rapidly to meet the increasing depreciation of these bills."

This is exactly what might have been expected. No one was such a fool in those days as to say that the high prices thus made were a good thing for the country, as thousands are idiotic enough to say now about the high prices that would be created by the debasement of the currency from gold to silver of little more than half its value.

The Legislatures of several of the States were compelled by the Populists of those days to enact anti-creditor laws. Tender laws as we have seen were enacted. The outraged creditors called them tough laws. "Stay and relief laws," intended to delay or prevent the collection of just debts were passed in different States. A "stay law" in Maryland postponed the collection of debts for two years, and a similar act was passed in Georgia. In North Carolina suits were suspended for twelve months, leading a prominent lawyer to assert that the laws of the State seemed to be very favorable to knavish debtors.

There was, of course, a strong opposition to all these measures, for there were honest and clear-headed men in all the States who saw the tendency of these dishonest devices, but they were for a long time overborne by the shortsighted mob in alliance with dishonest debtors. Men who opposed the repudiation laws and the rag-money issues were denounced as enemies of the public welfare, and were persecuted in various ways. The Governor of New Jersey, when he refused to sanction a bill for the issue of paper money, was dragged through the streets in effigy, and the angry populace could not be appeased until an extra session of the Legislature had been convened to pass a law similar to the one that the Governor had rejected.

While the Populists of the day were carrying on this pernicious agitation and forcing the State legislators to pass dishonest and stupid laws, Nature was dealing most kindly with the young Republic. All that it required to free itself from its temporary embarrassments was to be governed according to the principles of honesty and common sense. Franklin, writing of its condition, said:

"And I do not remember ever to have seen during my long life more signs of public felicity than appears at present throughout the United States; the cultivators of the earth who make the bulk of our nation have made good crops which are paid for at high prices with ready money; its artisans, too, receive high wages and the value of all estates is augmented greatly. Merchants and shopkeepers, indeed, complain that there is not business enough, but this is evidently owing to the fewness of buyers, not to the too great number of sellers; for the consumption of goods was never greater, as appears by the dress, furniture and manner of living of all ranks of people."

"Had the currency of the times," adds the historian, "been honest, this picture would have meant prosperity." What Benjamin Franklin said of his country in his day applies with equal, or even greater, force to the United States of our own time. It is a greatly favored country, and is free from any of what are considered the scourges of nations—war, pestilence and famine. It is a land of peace and plenty, yet unprincipled agitators are doing what they can to bring upon it distress and suffering. The Populists of the eighteenth century failed to carry out their mad projects. The good sense and the honesty of the silent majority were strong enough to defeat them and to undo the mischief they had done. It is somewhat singular that the names of the leaders of the Populists of those days are forgotten, while the memory of the men who opposed them is held in honor.

LI HUNG CHANG.

We are glad to find that His Excellency Li Hung Chang has been treated with the respect and attention due to a man of his high station who is a guest of the people of this Dominion. And he is personally and officially worthy of their respect. He is a man of uncommon ability who has devoted himself to the service of his country. He has by dint of pure merit and force of character raised himself step by step to the highest position under the Sovereign in the kingdom of China. He has encountered many difficulties and he has surmounted them all, and he has made many enemies and has got the better of them all. His methods have not been those of a British statesman, it is true; but we have not heard that they have, taking for their measure the Chinese standard of excellence, been at all objectionable. It is evident that the Chinese regard Li Hung Chang as a good man as well as a great statesman, and it is by the estimate of the best of his own countrymen that he should be judged.

It is impossible to form a reasonable conjecture as to what will be the effect of Li Hung Chang's visit to Europe and America as regards the relations of China with foreign countries or the internal improvement of the Empire. He is very far indeed from being absolute master of China. He has many and powerful opponents who are no doubt watching their chance to thwart his designs, and there are influences in the country which are opposed to change of any kind. It is quite possible that these influences and these enemies will be too many and too strong for Li Hung Chang. They may defeat his projects and prevent his carrying out a more liberal policy than China has hitherto followed. Besides, it is impossible to say what his projects and his policy really are. He is not a communicative man as regards his own intentions and schemes, and what he says must not always be taken as indicating what he thinks. It is generally supposed that the Chinese statesman is liberal in his views and that if he had his own way he would improve and liberalize the policy of the Government of his country, both domestic and foreign—and it is more than likely that the supposition is true or very near the truth, but it may be some time before the peoples of the West hear that his policy has been put in practice by the powers that be in China.

SNEAKING OUT OF IT.

The Province repeats Mr. McInnes, M.P.'s question "Whether the Government are aware that Hon. Mr. Davie, Chief Justice of British Columbia, was engaged in canvassing during the late elections; if so, is it the intention of the Government to inquire into the matter?" and then adds: "Mr. Laurier replied, the Government was not aware; the facts had not been brought to its attention. So the matter dropped, leaving no reflection on the Chief Justice." And thus does the admiring organ seek to extricate Mr. McInnes from a malignant calumny which he had no more ability to prove than the manliness to retract.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

Ingenious interviewers have attempted in vain to get from the Hon. Mr. Chamberlain his opinion on some of the burning questions that agitate the minds of people in the United States and Canada. He told them at first that his visit to America was not a public one; that, indeed, he came to escape for a time the cares of office, and to divert his mind from the consideration of public affairs and that he had nothing to say that would interest the public. He has been firm in his refusal to talk politics, either English, Canadian or American. He has not, like our effusive Canadian Premier, taken the American interviewer into his confidence and given him information which he withheld from his fellow-countrymen. The American newspapers have, we see, respected Mr. Chamberlain's wishes. They have not pestered him for interviews, nor have they, as some of them have been known to do, given the public imaginary conversations and made Mr. Chamberlain one of the interlocutors. When the Secretary of State for the Colonies was in the Opposition he was most communicative and was consequently much in favor with the reporters, but since he has borne the responsibilities of office he has cultivated a wise and judicious reticence which is most becoming in a Minister of State. The Canadian people will know in good time what Mr. Chamberlain thinks of many subjects in which they are more or less deeply interested. He is not the man to be silent when he sees it his duty to speak—and to speak with the utmost plainness.

HOW NOT TO DO IT.

Our City Council are about to carry out as stupid a piece of work as could well be imagined. They have had complaints that Government House and a number of large houses between it and Fort street have been carrying their closet drains on to Belcher street, whence the sewage is conveyed for some distance to Charles street, where it is discharged on to the open street. To cure this, and as the city is poor, the Provincial Government, who are responsible for Government House, have agreed to pay $1,000, the city to pay $1,000 and the private property owners, $1,000, to have a drain constructed to the sea. It will hardly be credited that it is proposed to carry this sewage to Ross bay, where it will lodge forever, instead of joining the accepted system, already working without a fault. By taking the drain by Richardson street to Cook street the council would have a proper sanitary drain, falling into the sea at a proper place for sewage matter to be deposited. That drain would be part and parcel of the general sewage system of the city, and would, if properly laid, work forever without a hitch and without danger to the health of the citizens, instead of being taken to a bay where it will be a constant source of danger. The thing is so clear that it is surprising it has to be pointed out.

DISMISSALS.

There is still some talk about dismissals from office, but we do not believe that it will be followed up by the arbitrary action threatened by the Hon. Mr. Davies and others. As there is nothing in the Civil Service Act making it unlawful for civil servants to take part in elections, and as there is no regulation for the guidance of civil servants in the matter, nothing could be more unjust than for a Government to dismiss a civil servant who had done his duty faithfully and efficiently merely because he talked politics and did not vote for the man whom the politician at the head of his department considered the right one. Such a dismissal on the part of the Government is, in fact, positively dishonest. Civil servants are obliged to pay towards a superannuation fund. Their contributions are not voluntary. The money is every month deducted from their pay. The very circumstance that the Government exacts this contribution towards a superannuation fund is a sort of guarantee that civil servants shall retain their situations as long as they are able to perform their duties and conform to the known rules and regulations of the service. When the civil servant votes for the man of his choice and speaks in favor of the party to which he belongs he does not violate any law or regulation. What justice is there, then, in punishing him for voting and talking politics?

If it is considered necessary to the effectiveness of the civil service that its members shall not be qualified to vote or to take any part in political contests let a law be enacted disfranchising them and making it unlawful for them to take a side in a political contest. Such a law would, we consider, be unjust, and we are quite sure that it is unnecessary. Until it is enacted, to dismiss a civil servant for taking part in an election is an act of arbitrary power that cannot be justified.

THE matron of the British Columbia Protestant Orphans' Home thankfully acknowledges receipt of the following donations for August: Illustrated papers, Mr. Humphreys; DAILY COLONIST, Colonist Publishing Co.; War Cry, Salvation Army; milk, Mr. R. E. Knowles; fish, Mr. Flewin, Mrs. Shotbolt, Mrs. Worlock, a friend; vegetables, Mr. Jack, Mr. Flewin; candies, Mr. Jeeves, Mr. D. H. Ross, a friend; toys, Dr. and Mrs. I C. Harmon; apples, Erskine, Wall & Co.; cakes, Epworth League; clothing, King's Daughters, Mrs. J. W. Williams, Mrs. Cohen, Mrs. Neil, two school-girls, Miss C. Going, a friend. Cash, Mrs. Harrington, $5; United Service Masonic Lodge, $25. The net proceeds of the recent excursion on the steamer Joan, the use of which was freely given by the Messrs. Dunsmuir, amounted to the handsome sum of $157.85.

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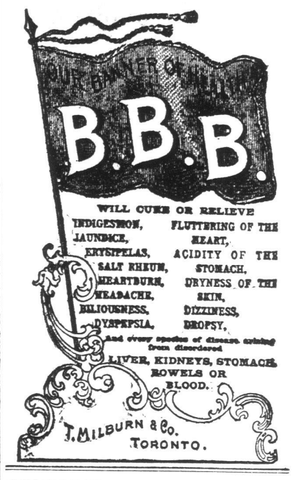

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Dated this August 29th, 1896.

(signed) GEORGE BROWN.
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