

The Colonist.

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 1891.

A BAD PRECEDENT.

We were not surprised to see that the Legislative Assembly was very reluctant to pass "The Enabling Bill." It is fortunate that measures of that nature are not often brought before the Legislature. Every one knows that it is not wise to encourage municipal bodies to spend the people's money without proper legal authority. The people cannot be too careful in providing that every check on representative and executive bodies is kept in good working order, and when occasion requires, properly and promptly applied. The bill entitled "An Act respecting the Corporation of New Westminster" should, if it had its proper designation, be called a bill to encourage Corporations to disregard the law, and to spend money without authority. This, the preamble of the bill itself shows with sufficient clearness. Here it is:

"Whereas the Corporation of the City of New Westminster has expended large sums of money in providing for the construction, maintenance and operation by the said Corporation, of water-works for the supply of water within the city and its suburbs, and to the inhabitants of the said city and suburbs; and of electric light and machinery for the supply of light and lighting the city and its suburbs; and of a steam ferry between the said city and the municipality of S. A. Bay, and in providing suitable ferries, landings, pontoons and other things in the said other municipality; and whereas the proper operation of the said water-works, and the erection of a building for a public library and other purposes; and in other ways for the improvement and advancement of the said city; and for the purpose aforesaid has entered into contracts respecting the same:

"And whereas doubts have arisen with reference to the powers of the said Corporation to make effectual provisions for the construction, maintenance and operation by the said Corporation of the said water-works, and electric plant and machinery, and steam-ferries and public library, etc.:

"From this it is seen that the Corporation of New Westminster, having spent a large sum of money which it had no right to spend, applied to the Legislative Assembly for a law to save its members from the consequences of their illegal acts. It is no excuse to say that the Corporation expended the money for useful purposes. It had no right to spend a single dollar for any purpose without due authority. If Corporations are permitted to do what the New Westminster Corporation did, there is nothing to hinder their launching out into the most extravagant expenditure. When they know that all they have to do to get clear of the obligations they have incurred and the other consequences of their unauthorized acts is to go to the Legislature and get an Enabling Bill passed, the checks of the Charter or of the Municipal laws are perfectly useless to protect the ratepayers. It may be said that the ratepayers or a majority of them approve of the Corporation's acts, and are willing to condone its offences. This fact should have little weight with the Legislature. The duty of its members is to legislate not for any particular municipality but for all the municipalities in the province. If one municipality can expend money irregularly and get whitewashed by the Assembly, another can do the same and the Legislature can be made to approve the acts of those who violate the laws which it has itself made. This is not a nice position for the Legislature to be placed in. If it condones the offence of a Corporation it becomes a partner in its guilt.

The rate-payers of all the other municipalities are interested in the New Westminster case. It is their interest to keep the Corporations strictly up to the mark in money matters. They must, for their own protection, insist upon their rights. If unauthorized expenditure by the New Westminster Corporation is winked at by the Legislative Assembly, their own Corporation is freed from a needful restraint. It is of the very greatest importance that members of City Councils should be made to feel the weight of the responsibility of their acts. They must be made to realize that if they do wrong and act in defiance of law they must bear all the consequences of their wrongdoing. But when the Legislature steps in and frees them from responsibility, one of the safeguards which the ratepayers depend upon is taken away.

It may be that the majority of the Assembly thought that it would be punishing the Corporation of New Westminster too severely to refuse to pass the Enabling Bill, and they have in effect rendered the paradoxical verdict "Not guilty, but don't do it again." And it may be that the experience of the offending Corporation has been so unpleasant that it will not repeat its offence. But we do trust that the members of the Legislature have made a resolution not to allow this New Westminster Act to be a precedent. The kind of legislation asked for by the Corporation of that city is most mischievous, and ought not to be repeated.

THE COMMON SENSE COURSE.

The Legislative Assembly acted wisely in the matter of the Coal Mines Regulation Act. Mr. Keith contended that Chinamen should be excluded from coal mines, because their presence in them increased the dangers of mining. Mr. Forster, the other miners' representative, took precisely the same ground. When evidence in support of this position was asked for there was none forthcoming. Men of sense and intelligence would bring themselves into contempt if they voted for a measure excluding Chinamen from coal mines before they were convinced by reliable testimony that it is not safe to allow men of that nature to work in such mines. It would be generally concluded that they were influenced by blind prejudice, or that they voted to gain or to retain votes without giving the merits of the case a moment's consideration.

It is well known that there are many men in this province who would not, if they had their own way, permit Chinamen to be employed in any capacity. This is because they believe Chinamen to be worse than white men, but because they live cheaply, work for low wages, and send a large proportion of their earnings to their relatives at home.

Those who condemn the Chinese on these grounds have votes, and those votes will be pretty sure to be polled against the candidate for legislative honors, who shows any favor to Chinamen. It would not, however, do for the Legislature to enact laws discriminating against Chinamen because they have yellow complexions and live differently from some Europeans. Before they can make laws, excluding Chinamen from coal mines, they should be able to show that their employment would be an injury to the public. The member, therefore, who introduced the bill to exclude Chinamen from coal mines, should have had in his possession evidence to prove that men of the Mongolian race are an element of danger in such mines. He should have been able to produce such an array of facts to prove his contention, as would leave those who are opposed to excluding them without even a pretext for voting against his measure. But, as the discussion proceeded, it was seen that very little labor had been expended in collecting evidence and that by far the greater part of that which had been collected, went to prove that it is as safe to send Chinamen into a coal mine as it is to send white men. In the face of this evidence, what was a member to do who wanted to give an intelligent and honest vote? He certainly could not vote for the bill introduced by Mr. Keith, whose only objection to the Chinamen as a coal-miner was that he is too stupid and too ignorant to do the work without endangering his own life and the lives of his fellow-miners. It was evident, as the discussion went on, that Mr. Keith and the other supporters of the measure could not prove this, that in fact, they did not seriously attempt to do it. The newspapers which favored the measure pursued the same course. They denounced the Chinamen but did not even try to show that he is not fit to be trusted in a mine. We followed the discussion carefully, for we were most desirous to see what evidence there was to show that it is dangerous to allow Chinamen to mine for coal. But nothing was adduced that could be considered proof of Mr. Keith's contention. The editor of the Advertiser knows this. He heard the whole discussion, and yet he condemns the Government because its members and supporters did not vote for the measure which excluded the Chinese from coal mines because it was dangerous to have them there when there was not a tithe of evidence to prove that, as far as danger is concerned, they are not as well qualified to be coal miners as are the men of any other race. If Mr. Cotton had acted intelligently in that matter and according to the evidence, instead of denouncing the Government for refusing to exclude the Chinamen from coal mines until it was proved that they were unfit to work in them, he would have voted with those who declined to come to a decision on insufficient evidence. Censuring the Government because its members did what every man of common sense and common honesty ought to do, viz: refuse to condemn without evidence, is not what the intelligent and the conscientious electors of Vancouver approve. The News-Advertiser's attempt at prophecy was a failure. The Coal Mines Regulation Act has not been repealed.

THE CANADA LIFE.

The report presented at the annual meeting of the Canada Life Assurance Company, held in Hamilton, Ont., contains the record of the largest amount of new business ever taken in a year by this or any other Canadian company. Policies were written for \$5,583,121, and the total assurance now carried by the company exceeds fifty-four million dollars. The annual income is more than two millions, the year's addition to the assets more than half a million, and the total assets more than eleven millions. The exact figures under each heading will be found in the report in another column. Although La Grippie increased the death claims last year to an amount beyond the average of recent years, an even larger rate had been provided for, so determined in the management of the Canada Life to be always found on the safe side. The auditor and the committee on investments found everything in apple-pie order.

The Canada Life is getting to be an institution of national interest. It is forty-four years old and insures nearly 20,000 lives. Its business is increasing every year, though the utmost caution is exercised to reject all except the very best risks. Its income is larger than the incomes of several of the Canadian provinces. It is under contract to pay to its policy-holders an amount equal to one-fifth of the net debts of the Dominion of Canada. To conduct a financial institution of this scope and extent requires ability of the first order, which the Canada Life must have had for many years to produce the past success and the present position of the company. The company is represented in this city by Mr. A. W. Jones, of Jones & Bridgman.

ON ROYAL BAY.

A Delightful Summer Resort, which Capitalists Propose to Make Popular. A Railway and Ferry Connection with Victoria—A Palatial Hotel Projected.

Just on the other side of Esquimalt lagoon, facing Royal Roads, and extending almost to Albert Head, is a strip of delightful situated, park-like land that has recently been taken in hand by a syndicate, comprising three or four of the most prominent capitalists of Victoria. Their intention is to make the spot the site for a fashionable summering place, for which it is by nature well adapted in every way.

The land controlled by the syndicate contains four hundred acres, gently sloping to a sandy beach, a few hundred feet away from the water, yet how could he find out who had bought the article? An idea struck him, however. He would charge each of his wealthy customers who had bought one of the six other saddles with the seventh one. Those who had not bought the saddle would be at once so, and the purchaser would be the one who had bought the article. After making out the bill and sending them to his customers, the store-keeper was compelled to visit a clerk at some distance. He told his clerk what he had done, and instructed him to beg the pardon of every customer who said he had bought no saddle, and to tell him that the item had been put on his bill by mistake.

"The proprietor of the store made his trip, and when he returned home, several days after starting, he asked his clerk who had really bought the saddle in question. The clerk was evidently worried, and said: 'Eleven of those, about whom we were in doubt, have been here to pay their bills. One man was paid for the one saddle; one man wasn't quite certain whether he had bought a saddle or not, but would let us know in a day or two, and the other was sure that he had made a mistake, because he bought two new saddles last year, and didn't need any more.'

"The store-keeper was somewhat taken aback at the overwhelming success of his little scheme; but as there was nothing else to do, he quietly pocketed the money and kept his mouth shut."

PAYING FOR A SADDLE.

George Plankers Who Did Not Scan Their Bills Carefully. "A story occurs to me," he said to a writer in the New York Tribune, "of the slipshod way in which the planters used to do business in the South before the war." A few puffs at his cigar, and he had his anecdote drawn up in proper form. "There used to be a man who kept a general store in Georgia at some distance from any large town. His customers were chiefly the planters, who had their big estates in the neighborhood. One time the store-keeper bought a dozen saddles, and two months later, when he made out his annual bills, he could account for only eleven of them. He had five on hand, but his books contained entries of the sales of only six of the others. He or his clerk had undoubtedly sold one and forgot to charge it."

"Here was a dilemma. Being a thrifty man, he did not wish to lose the price of a saddle, yet how could he find out who had bought the article? An idea struck him, however. He would charge each of his wealthy customers who had bought one of the six other saddles with the seventh one. Those who had not bought the saddle would be at once so, and the purchaser would be the one who had bought the article. After making out the bill and sending them to his customers, the store-keeper was compelled to visit a clerk at some distance. He told his clerk what he had done, and instructed him to beg the pardon of every customer who said he had bought no saddle, and to tell him that the item had been put on his bill by mistake."

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CHARACTER AND POKER.

A Good Way to Learn a Man's Disposition.

It is an easy matter to read a man's character by the way he plays an ordinary game of poker, says the New York Herald. A man without any nerve, or who speaks plainly, a coward, is the most easy of all to detect. He will play a mean, contemptible game, and will prefer to win a dollar or two on a full hand to taking the least risk in raising his opponents. He will never bet more than the blind unless he has a sure thing, and even if he has four of a kind his manner will be undecided, because he is fearful that some one else might hold a straight flush.

Next comes the man who plays to win, or who in a story book would be referred to as an avaricious miser. This gentleman will show his true colors by the niggardly way he has of putting up his money and by the longing looks with which he regards his neighbor's pile of chips. He is not cowardly, yet he won't bet unless he is sure to win. It is easy to detect the coward by the way he bet on a good hand, when he has it. No subterfuge is too mean for him, and he will resort to all kinds of tricks to throw his opponents off their guard. If he holds two pairs he is sure to make some remark about trying to fill a straight. If he has three of a kind he will make an offhand statement that he has a small pair, and is going to bet on them. When he wins a few dollars he will make some excuse and get out of the game. Watch the next time you play and see if what I say is not true.

An ordinary man will come down squarely with his money. He may bluff, but he will play his hand for what it is worth, and quit when he thinks he has gone far enough.

An aggressive fellow shows fight in every movement. If he has been losing he will affect his play in the least. He will bluff and bet away until he loses all his money or turns the tide of his luck and comes out winner. Some of the public should know who are the correspondents on this subject. What is the best? For myself, I must confess that the one before the public is the one that commends itself to me, because there is every prospect that he can get quickly. Apropos of the matter, I learn that a certain New York resident, who is a certain New York resident, offered \$10,000 to a publishing house to come and establish themselves there, merely to have the name of their town appear on their publications, and the amount to be expended by that firm would be about one-fifth of the bonus received, whereas in the present instance, I am informed, every dollar of the bonus asked from Victoria is to be expended on Vancouver Island. What is the best? 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