

The Colonist.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 11, 1903.

PUBLISHED BY

The Colonist Printing & Publishing Company, Limited Liability.
No. 27 Broad Street, Victoria, B. C.
A. G. SARGISON, Managing Director.

THE DAILY COLONIST

Delivered by carrier at 20 cents per week.
Sold by retail at 5 cents per copy.
One year \$5.00
Six months 2.50
Three months 1.25

SEMI-WEEKLY COLONIST

One year \$1.00
Six months50
Three months25

Sent postpaid to Canada, United Kingdom and United States.

TARTE REVIVES AN ISSUE.

When Mr. J. Isaac Tarte was invited to be present at a great Conservative reunion in the province of Quebec there was some doubt whether he would accept the invitation. When he did accept it there was no doubt that he would have been interested in the subject. Mr. Tarte is nothing if not frank and outspoken. He owes his unique position in Canadian politics to his frankness and plain speaking. No one, friend nor foe, can be in the least doubtful as to what Mr. Tarte means when he speaks his mind. He may lack other virtues, but the virtue of candor is unquestionably his. Candor in politics is generally supposed to be alien to a politician. Mr. Tarte has another great personal quality. He is one of those happy mortals whose sunny disposition refuses to carry the acrimony of politics into the ordinary relations of life. His opponents grow very angry with him. He is able to protect himself, but he does not get angry with them, and that gives him a tremendous advantage. People hate the angry and bitter politician. People love the kind, cheerful, and unassuming man. Mr. Tarte's analysis of the present government was acute and accurate. He pointed out that the government now possesses no leaders who represent their own province, and that Sir Wilfrid Laurier only remains in public life to maintain its falling hold upon Quebec, but that he will retire immediately after the election, leaving Quebec to the management of Trefontaine and company, for whom Mr. Tarte expressed the utmost contempt and with whom he declined to have anything to do. The successor of Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the Liberal party would be Mr. Fielding, and that consideration led Mr. Tarte to discuss the political and policy of the party as thus modified. He declared that he had ever changed his views on the tariff question. When he was accused of announcing a new policy he was merely giving expression to the opinion he has always held, both publicly and privately. A government with Mr. Fielding at the head of it would be a free trade government, and his dismissal was the indication to the world that the free trade policy of the party was in control. Mr. Tarte is nothing if not illuminating. They shed considerable light upon the constitution of the Laurier government. 1896 was not the defeat of the National Policy. The Laurier administration was the outcome of a compromise by which men who differed from the Conservative party upon other grounds agreed to support the Liberal party provided the National Policy was not interfered with. Mr. Tarte was a party to that compromise. He represented the right-wing of the Liberal party. He now points out with unobscured truth that the Liberal party possesses no protection wing, and is in the same position as it was when it was beaten out of its boots in 1896. Mr. Tarte has performed a national service in reviving the tariff issue at a moment when the railway issue is prominently before the country. That rural phantom of Sir Wilfrid Laurier had its purpose. It was to be the voice which would gather in the Canadian electors as they are gathered into a net. Then when a verdict had been taken, the destinies of the country were to be handed over to Mr. Fielding, and the continuity of Canadian policy to be radically altered in the direction of free trade. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's railway policy has not proved to be exactly what was intended from what was anticipated. The attitude of the country was first, curiosity, second, amazement, and finally, a settled conviction that Sir Wilfrid is a mighty unsafe leader under the beaten track, and that glittering rhetoric is an insecure foundation for a comprehensive constructive policy. His party has coldly left him to take the entire responsibility for the policy he has enunciated. Even Liberals find a difficulty in finding arguments to support it and there is a voice which is heard everywhere. This has left the government in a hopeless mess. It is in much worse shape to take an appeal to the country than it was before the railway policy was brought out, and it is expected to be in a much better shape. The government is now in the position that it must expect a minority in every province in Canada except Quebec, and there the personal strength of Sir Wilfrid Laurier is needed to overcome the hostility of the people towards tariff revision. The outlook for the Liberal party is hopeless. It dare not appeal

to the country, it dare not delay in appealing to the country, and in the meantime the longest session in the history of Canada is dragging and its weary days, and like a river flowing into a desert is likely to lose itself in sand. Such is the burden of Mr. Tarte's analysis of the situation. It is timely and it is true. The Laurier government is doomed beyond possibility of redemption. It was begun in compromise and it is ending without dignity save that with which the spectacular genius of its leader has invested it.

CONCERNING PETITIONS.

It is as interesting to find anyone maintaining the right of direct petition to the Sovereign or his representative in these days, as to find a relic of the Stone Age. Nobody that we know of ever denied the right of petition to the Crown, but surely, it has long been settled that such a petition must be thought, and be replied to upon, and addressed to the proper authorities. It is something more unfortunate than the maintenance of such an argument could be imagined it would be the citation of a precedent from the reign of George the Third in support of it. The right of petition is an infringement of the Royal prerogative to receive and consider such a petition, it would be a most unwarrantable exercise of it. We have no means of knowing in what manner our Lieutenant-Governor received his "petitions." We doubt not that with his well-known gentle courtesy, he endeavored to relieve an extremely embarrassing position in which they had placed themselves and him by their ignorance of constitutional usage, and political etiquette. But we should be very much surprised indeed if they were not told, and in so many words, that the Crown was governed only by the advice of its ministers. It is not a matter of which we desire to say any word, because there are things in this world that are so ridiculous as to verge upon the painful, and this is one of them. It may, however, be pointed out that in George the Third's reign the constitution of the cabinet was not yet complete, and that he attempted, with most grievous results, to withstand the change that was taking place from government by prerogative to responsible government. It was at that very time that Charles James Fox was insisting that the King should not be suffered to be his own minister, and that even Lord North was saying, "The King ought to be treated with all sort of respect and attention, but the appearance of power is all that a King of this country can have." As for Pitt, it was Pitt, "the great commoner," or was it some other man, who resigned office because he would not remain in a situation which made him responsible for measures he was not allowed to suggest? And is not Pitt the man whose reluctant recall to office with power to select his own colleagues marked the final overthrow of the prerogative which claimed or permitted the interference of the Crown, or perhaps we should say the King? During the reign of Queen Victoria the constitutional position of the Crown's advisers was solidified by a thousand precedents. We may mention one. In 1851 Lord Stanley was called upon to form a ministry and the House of Commons. It was said at the time that he had failed because Her Majesty had refused to grant him a dissolution. His own words, taken from Hansard, show the incorrectness of the report. He said, "I do not think more of the party as thus modified. He declared that he had ever changed his views on the tariff question. When he was accused of announcing a new policy he was merely giving expression to the opinion he has always held, both publicly and privately. A government with Mr. Fielding at the head of it would be a free trade government, and his dismissal was the indication to the world that the free trade policy of the party was in control. Mr. Tarte is nothing if not illuminating. They shed considerable light upon the constitution of the Laurier government. 1896 was not the defeat of the National Policy. 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POSTAL RATES.

We have seen somewhere lately that the question of postal rates upon British newspapers and periodicals coming to Canada has been taken up from the point of view we have always maintained, namely, the value to British trade of British advertising in Canada. The state of affairs which the British Post Office has undertaken to perpetuate, with all its almost incredible stupidity of a British department, is ludicrous in the extreme. For what does the British Post Office imagine people advertise for in weekly and monthly periodicals? Is it in order to deluge the world with cheap but hap-

less literature, or is it in order to take advantage of the popular taste for that class of literature to push the sale of it? We get the literature at reasonable rates, or some of it, through editions printed in New York, but we get it minus British advertisements, and plus United States advertisements. Advertising on this large continent is a highly developed science. It is an art, a means of communication between seller and buyer by means of which a very large proportion of the actual business is transacted. It is not merely a means of advertising, it is a means of introducing some novelty, it is one of the main avenues of commercial interchange. Now, the point is this. Here in Canada are six and a half millions of people, who do their buying upon intelligible and intelligent advertisements, and who never see a British advertisement from one year's end to another, directly because of some two penny half-penny Post Office regulations. What monstrous stupidity, what monstrous obstinacy, and what monstrous stubbornness on the part of a people who call themselves a commercial nation, and with whom we are particularly anxious to trade in preference to all others!

ORGANIZATION.

It needs no argument to impress upon the candidates and campaign committees of the Conservative party that, with the exception of the Liberal party, the active campaigning should be kept up from now till the ballots are counted. The lesson of organization is taught in every campaign, and too often forgotten as soon as the campaign is over. We are caught by the Liberal party. We have been plunged into it. If the Conservative party is to have any account of itself, we may be quite sure that the Liberal party will, in the matter of organization, be the model to follow. Mr. Martin the Liberal party has an active and able campaign leader. A campaign leader is one who is not only a leader while it lasts. His tactical ability is not by any means the least of his merits, and must not be overlooked for a moment. We hope we are not taking too much for granted in assuming that he is a campaign leader of the Liberal party. Nobody seems to be taking any definite steps in campaign work on the Liberal side. He goes into this campaign in a somewhat doubtful relation to the Liberal party. It is true, but there will be no doubt as to the relation he will hold to it when he comes out of the campaign. From the election, he will be, undoubtedly, unquestionably, the leader of the Liberal party. In campaigns it is the leaders who owe their position to influence and manipulation of party out groups. It is the men who have made their reputation in the rough and tumble of this country can have. As for Pitt, it was Pitt, "the great commoner," or was it some other man, who resigned office because he would not remain in a situation which made him responsible for measures he was not allowed to suggest? And is not Pitt the man whose reluctant recall to office with power to select his own colleagues marked the final overthrow of the prerogative which claimed or permitted the interference of the Crown, or perhaps we should say the King? During the reign of Queen Victoria the constitutional position of the Crown's advisers was solidified by a thousand precedents. We may mention one. In 1851 Lord Stanley was called upon to form a ministry and the House of Commons. It was said at the time that he had failed because Her Majesty had refused to grant him a dissolution. His own words, taken from Hansard, show the incorrectness of the report. He said, "I do not think more of the party as thus modified. He declared that he had ever changed his views on the tariff question. When he was accused of announcing a new policy he was merely giving expression to the opinion he has always held, both publicly and privately. 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THE ELECTIONS.

It is a relief to everyone to know that the provincial elections in British Columbia, which began in the end of October, British Columbia has been passing through a period of great political excitement during the last two or three years. The complexion of politics has been undergoing a radical change. Those who looked before and after the election of 1896, and the election of 1900, and the election of 1903, and the election of 1906, and the election of 1909, and the election of 1912, and the election of 1915, and the election of 1918, and the election of 1921, and the election of 1924, and the election of 1927, and the election of 1930, and the election of 1933, and the election of 1936, and the election of 1939, and the election of 1942, and the election of 1945, and the election of 1948, and the election of 1951, and the election of 1954, and the election of 1957, and the election of 1960, and the election of 1963, and the election of 1966, and the election of 1969, and the election of 1972, and the election of 1975, and the election of 1978, and the election of 1981, and the election of 1984, and the election of 1987, and the election of 1990, and the election of 1993, and the election of 1996, and the election of 1999, and the election of 2002, and the election of 2005, and the 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