The Colonist.

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AN IMPERIAL QUESTION

In adopting the idea that the Imperial government shall be asked to appoint a commission to inquire into the Oriental question as it affects this province, Mr. McBride has taken a step with which the Colonial Office may be very fully in accord. His plan differs from that of Mr. Hawthornthwaite, because he proposes to proceed through the regular constitutional channel. The Colonist has on many occasions said that the issues presented by the close contact of the white and Asiatic races are of Imperial gravity. We have not attempted to belittle them in any way, and our criticism of the Exclusion Leagues' methods was based chiefly upon the ground that they only touched the fringe of a great subject, and touched it in a manner calculated to render it more difficult to adjust. Whether a few hundred Japanese more or less come into the Dominion is not very serious. They would soon be lost in the great expansion of the country. A few score of Chinamen may enter the province without disturbing the industrial equilibrium, and the same is true of the Hindus. There are said to be 200 of the latter on their way here on the steamer Monteagle. They will probably not be allowed to land, but if they were, they would not greatly dislocate the labor market. These things are only incidents in a great movement. These parties are only the skirmishers in front of a great army. We may or may not succeed in keeping them out of British Columbia, but the Asiatics have begun to move, and it is time for the British people to decide what they are going to do about it. If the British Columbia legislature requests Imperial investigation into this momentous question, it may have the credit of taking a lead in a direction which other parts of the Empire will readily follow. We quote the following from an editorial which appeared in the London Times of February 3rd:

"Of the great standing difficulty of the Empire we have just had a hint or two in recent affairs. Happily we have for the time smoothed over the Japanese question in Vancouver, and now the British Indian question in the Transvaal. These are only warnings of what is in store. There is nothing enduring in our settlements, and it is as certain as sunrise that, sooner or later, and no one can say how soon, we shall have to confront similar difficulties, perhaps in a much more serious form. Is it not time to consider very carefully whether our machinery is the best conceivable for dealing with this world-wide race question? We have seen how the Imperial Cabinet has dealt with the comparatively small trouble in South Africa; and it is certainly not a method that inspires confidence in view of possible and probable eventualities. Surely it is time to establish some body more fully in touch with the various communities and races composing the Empire, which should, at the lowest, provide the detailed knowledge needed to nip trouble in the bud, and, we might hope also, the instructed imagination of which we see so little evidence in official quarters. In sheer ignorance, or panic, or thoughtlessness, some colony may at any moment produce complications in this delicately organized Empire which may baffle our best statesmanship. Is it not high time that, at any rate, upon this color question with its enormous risks, we should have some thoroughgoing understanding among all portions of the Empire? It is important enough for a Colonial Conference ad hoc; but, if that is too much to ask for, the new Secretariat might at least pave the way by communication with the self-governing Colonies for a commission of some sort, which should elaborate an Imperial scheme to anticipate and avert evil by a common understanding. The importance of the problem cannot be overstated, and urgency may come upon us at any time, with little or no warning, yet we have at present no Imperial opinion about the race question, far less any Imperial unanimity about practical policy.

We invite the very serious consideration of the public to this extract, for we think it shows the gravity of the situation very clearly. It shows, we think, that the issue is more than a local one, and that it must be settled by other methods than parades and riotous demonstrations. It must be approached with calmness. As we have mentioned above, it is understood that 200 people from India are on their way to this country. When they left home, they believed they had a right to come here. At great sacrifice in the majority of cases, they secured the money to pay their passage. They come here, doubtless, because they have heard that the majority of those who preceded them have done very well, relatively speaking. The laws of the Dominion and the province will turn them back, or if these particular people should not be turned back, there will certainly be others coming later who will be turned back. What will they say on their return to India? What sort of a shock will British good faith receive in India when these men return impoverished and tell that they were refused entrance to a land under the same flag as that which flies over India? We are far from suggesting that Hindus should be permitted to enter the country. We speak as we do solely for the purpose of emphazing the nature of the problem with which the British people are confronted. To us it seems abundantly clear that the whole subject calls for immediate consideration and that in the meantime every effort ought to be made to prevent any further movement from India into Canada.

MR. BRYCE AND HIS MISSION.

It is noteworthy and regrettable that the press of the eastern provinces does not grow very enthusiastic over the visit of Ambassador Bryce. Rightly or wrongly an impression has gone abroad to the effect that he comes to Canada charged with the duty of seeing how much we can be made to give up to the United States. Mr. Bryce would like to make a record in a diplomatic way by settling all outstanding questions between the Dominion and its southern neighbor, and all Canadians will join in the hope that he will be successful, but if he does not understand that no one-sided arrangement will be acceptable to the Canadian people, it will not be because he has not been told. We gave a resume of the subjects of his mission as outlined in the Ottawa Free Press, a paper which is in a position to learn what is talked of in government circles. As we said yesterday in commenting upon them, there does not appear to be in any one of them any difficulty that ought to present serious difficulty. As to the pecuniary claims, we are inclined to think with the Monteral Witness that there is very little use in expecting the United States to deal fairly with us in regard to them. As every one knows, the government of that country could not find enough claimants to absorb the full amount of the Alabama award, nor enough sense of national dignity to refund the surplus, although if it had been refunded the whole world would have acclaimed the act as crowning the principle of international arbitration with an exhibition of national honesty that would have done more to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes between governments than anything else could. The Witness cites the case of a Canadian vessel that was seized upon the lakes before the war of 1812. The owners sued for damages and got a verdict, but they never got a cent of the money. It was given to an official of the United States government to pay over to the owners of the vessel, but he kept it. Later one of the Presidents recommended Congress to pay the amount with interest to the Canadian owners, but that body refused to do so. Later still President Cleveland sounded Congress on the subject, but he found no disposition to pay the bill, and so it remains unpaid. In view of such an experience it seems hardly worth while to talk about settling pecuniary claims with the United States. It is just as well to wipe them off the slate and have done with it. On the other matters the disposition of Canadians is to have no settlement except on fair principles, and if Mr. Bryce is under the impression that the people of the Dominion will support him in any proposal that is not equitable, he may just as well return to Washington.

SOME OPEN QUESTIONS

The list of subjects with which Ambassador Bryce has to deal on his present visit to Ottawa is not very serious, if the Free Press of that city is well informed. They embrace:

The control of the waterways dividing Canada from the United States

Transit free of duty of merchandise across portions of American and Canadian territory.

Transit of merchandise without payment of duty until arrival at points in the interior.

The application of the alien labor laws to citizens of the United States and Canada.

Reciprocal mine owning rights.

Conveyance of American prisoners through Canadian territory and vice versa.

Reciprocal salvage and wrecking rights.

The use of logging booms in the St. John river.

The disposition of certain pecuniary claims.

The exemption of Canadians going temporarily to the United States from payment of head tax.

Involved in the first question among other things, is the disposition of Niagara Falls. A law passed in 1906 which had the effect of preserving the Falls from further encroachment in the nature of commercial undertakings but this expires in June, 1909, and it is hoped that before that date arrives the two countries will reach an agreement that can be embodied in a treaty, whereby that great scenic attraction can be protected from complete disfigurement. The second item in the list refers to what is generally known as the bonding privilege, and the third is an amplification of it. There ought not to be much difficulty in coming to an understanding in regard to them. The application of the alien labor laws to the people of both countries is something that calls for a very great deal of consideration. At present the drift of labor is into Canada. There is nothing now to prevent working men from going freely from one country to the other, the provisions of the law only barring employers from making contracts for the importation of labor. As at present advised we are opposed to the idea of relaxing the statutory provisions in this respect. Reciprocity in mine-owning seems to be a reasonable proposition, and so does the conveyance of prisoners through the territory of either country. In regard to reciprocity, salvage and wreckage, we shall make some inquiries before expressing any opinion The use of logging booms in the St. John river is a local question arising out of the Ashburton treaty by which the free right of navigation was secured to citizens of the United States in that river. We are not advised as to the nature of the several pecuniary questions which are open. The exemption of Canadians, temporarily entering the United States from the head tax, is in this part of the country already in practice. None of these questions ought to present any great difficulty.

NOT A LABOR MOVEMENT

It is a matter of surprise how slow certain British newspapers are to learn that the opposition to the introduction of Oriental labor in this province is something more than a mere labor agitation, although when we reflect upon what some of our eastern exchanges say on the subject the surprise is somewhat lessened. The opposition may have found its first expression in labor circles, but it is by no means confined thereto, nor is it inspired chiefly by considerations affecting the rate of wages. It has its source in something far deeper and more serious than that. It is due to a recognition of the tremendous fact that the Orient and Occident are now in close contact, and an "irrepressible conflict" has begun. The instinct of self-preservation is the prime motive power in the agitation in this province against an Oriental invasion. We are very glad to see that there are signs that the true aspect of the case is becoming understood in influential quarters in Great Britain, for the first step towards the solution of a difficulty is to understand it. As long as public men, and self-constituted exponents of public opinion are misled by the notion that the root of the exclusion movement is simply a matter of wages, the possibility of reaching some line of policy, whereby the contact of the East and the West may be rendered less dangerous, will remain remote. It has come about that the people of British Columbia have had cast upon them the responsibility of being the first to give expression to sentiments, which will shortly prevail wherever the English language is spoken. That is why the voice of the people here is misunderstood elsewhere.

A USEFUL BOOK.

Volume II. Part 2 of Martin's Mining and Water Cases has been just issued from the publishing house of the Carswell Company, Toronto. The compiler is Mr. Justice Martin of the Supreme Court of this province, and the cases are the decisions of the various courts having jurisdiction over our local mining matters. Contained in the volume are several appendices in which there are much useful information and many handy references. The following is a tabulated statement of the matters dealt with in this and the learned author's previous volumes on this subject:

1. All the reports of Mining Cases and of Water Clauses Consolidation Act Cases of British Columbia from the earliest time up to the 1st January, 1908, in all the courts, and from the trial up to the Privy Council.

2. All the Mining Statutes of practical utility covering the same period.

3. The Water Clauses Consolidation Act, 1897, and its many Amending Acts to date.

4. Tables of all the B. C. Mining and Water Proclamations, Ordinances and Statutes.

5. All the reports of cases in any way relating to B. C. Water Rights since March, 1905.

6. An alphabetical digest of all B. C. Water Cases (in addition to those under the Water Clauses Consolidation Act, and otherwise as above) from the earliest times, which are not herein reported in full.

7. All the reported Yukon Mining Cases decided by the Supreme Court of Canada.

8. All the head notes of all said cases, wherever reported, have been revised and re-written and amended where necessary, and the cases themselves annotated, and in many instances corrected and amplified.

9. Many important cases herein reported are not to be found elsewhere.

These works are necessarily of greater interest to the professional man than any one else, but even laymen can appreciate their value.

THE CANADA ZINC COMPANY.

A Bill is before the legislature providing that the government may loan $10,000 to the Canada Zinc Company for two years, for the purpose of enabling the company to instal the Snyder patent process for the treatment of lead-zinc ores. The loan is to be secured by a mortgage on the real and personal property of the company, included in which are the exclusive rights for Canada to use the Snyder process. It is proper that a proposal of this nature should be somewhat carefully examined.

First as to the principle. The legislature has already sanctioned provincial aid to private enterprises by bonusing creameries, and grants to agriculture, and on one occasion an advance by way of a loan was made to a quartz mining company in Cariboo. The former advances have proved very advantageous, although they were not in the nature of loans; the last-named did not produce any very good results, and the reason seems to have been that the quartz in the locality where the plant was established was not rich enough in gold values. The government has the machinery, which was pledged in security for the loan. But there is a much more conspicuous illustration of the principle of government aid to the development of new processes, namely, the experiments carried on by the Dominion Mines Department in connection with the electrical smelting of iron. There are certain differences in detail between the Dominion plan and that embodied in the proposed loan to the Canada Zinc Company. In the former case the government was at the whole expense, and it has been quite large. It had to employ the necessary experts and bear all expenditures, and the results of the investigation were made public as fast as they were arrived at, and consequently not one dollar of the cost will ever be directly recouped to the Dominion treasury. To this we not only have made no objection, but have on several occasions spoken in terms of approval of the efforts in that behalf made by Mr. Templeman, under whose supervision, as Minister, the work has been and is being carried on. The plan in the proposed Bill is for a loan, which will be repaid if the process is a success, and if it is not, the province will have the patent rights and such machinery and other property, real as well as personal, as the company may acquire. It has to employ no experts and be at no expense whatever over and above the amount of the loan. If the process is a success, the province will get its money back in two years, and the lead-zinc ores will become an exceedingly valuable source of business prosperity. The risk the government is running is the possibility of the failure of the process to produce commercially the results which it does experimentally, and it is not taking all the risk, but only a small part of it. True, if the process proves to be a success, it will be in the hands of a single company; but, on the other hand, this is only one of several similar processes, and if it is feasible private enterprise would be doubtless found ready to venture upon the expense of experimenting commercially with others. Under any circumstances it would be a highly satisfactory thing for the province to have even one process of treating the lead-zinc ores profitably established in the province. We think, therefore, that the proposed loan can be defended upon principle.

As to the necessity of perfecting some such process, there is unhappily no doubt. The great lead deposits in the Slocan, and we suppose the same is to be said of others in the province, are badly handicapped by the presence of zinc mixed mechanically with the lead, with silver in combination with both of them. Such an ore is very difficult to handle profitably. Two processes of separation are now employed, one by water and one by electricity. There is no need to go into particulars, but the way things work out, by reason of the penalizing of lead ores carrying more than 10 per cent. of zinc, the very low value of the zinc concentrates, owing to the presence of lead and iron in them, and the fact that the silver in the zinc is only paid for at half its value, the lead-zinc ores, which really contain very high values, are substantially worthless. We think it will be admitted that if by the Snyder process these ores can be treated profitably, the proposed loan will be money well employed. Under these circumstances, we feel warranted in saying that the proposal of the government is fully justified, although we admit that it is not desirable to let the impression go abroad that the province will make a practice of acting as banker for the promoters of new undertakings. Each case must be judged on its merits, and we are sure a meritorious case can be made out for the proposed loan to the Canada Zinc Company.

THE BUDGET DEBATE.

The Budget debate proved more than usually interesting. We are not quite sure that we see the force of the amendment proposed by Mr. Oliver. Substantially it amounted to an expression of regret that the government had not done more to colonize our farm land and thus prevent money from going out of the province for food products that can be raised at home. It also contained time-worn reference to sales of land to speculators. If we may judge from the lack of support which Mr. Oliver was able to enlist from his associates in the House, his amendment was not taken seriously, even by his own party. As a matter of fact, there was no reason why the House should adopt such a resolution, and as it was a straight vote of want of confidence, there never was any chance that it would be adopted. For this reason it is to be inferred that if his colleagues in opposition thought that the subject was worth discussing, they would doubtless have spoken to it. Dr. Kergin and Mr. Brewster did say something, but they were moderate and reasonable in their criticisms. Dr. King and Mr. Jones also spoke, but they are not reported as having said anything in favor of Mr. Oliver's amendment. We are inclined, therefore, to take the case presented by the member from Delta at about the same value as his fellow oppositionists placed upon it, namely, as something that may be treated with indifference.

Mr. Carter-Cotton made an interesting speech, which seems to have been carefully thought out, and was delivered with conspicuous care. This was specially manifest in his references to the proposal of Mr. Oliver that the province ought to surrender the personal property tax to the government. This is a subject upon which we intend for the present to keep an open mind. A period in the history of the province is approaching when there may have to be some readjustment of rights and responsibilities between the provincial and the local authorities, and for the present we do not care to become committed to any view of what is a subject of considerable difficulty, and in the determination of which many things have to be taken into account. As Mr. Cotton says, the conditions of British Columbia are such that the rules adopted in other provinces may not be wholly applicable here, but we are not sure that his views can wholly be sustained. Nevertheless, we congratulate him upon a very clear and impressive presentation of the opinion held by him on what is bound at a very early day to become a question of pressing interest. The whole speech of the President of the Council was, in point of general excellence, a notable contribution to the debates of the present session.

One does not need to be a prophet to be able to foresee that some of these fine days all that will remain of Victoria's prestige as the home of a flourishing sealing industry will be a memory. And the story of its decline and ultimate extinction will not constitute one of the most brilliant pages in the history of British diplomacy.

"Canada" says that fully 50,000 men will be employed in railway building in Canada this year. This is one section of Canada's great Army of Development. We may not be making much of a showing in the way of the pomp and paraphernalia of war, but fifty thousand men building railways through new regions abounding in wealth is a pretty good substitute for a lot of good-looking fellows in uniform living at the expense of the taxpayers.

Perhaps the facts hardly warrant the conclusion that a terrific struggle between capital and labor in the United States is impending, but there can be no doubt that during the forthcoming presidential campaign organized labor is going to play a more important part than ever before in the history of the country. An utterance by Mr. Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor, before the House committee of Congress on the judiciary on Monday, is pregnant with significance. He said: "I don't know what the courts will do, and what executives will do, goaded on by our victorious enemies, but I am to say to you just as solemnly as I can say, that the organizations of labor which have done so much to protect and improve the condition of the working people will not be driven out. You cannot afford to place the stigma of unlawfulness upon organizations which have done so much within the law to improve the conditions of the working people."

The Edinburgh engineering firm of Bruce, Peebles & Co. is arranging a liquidation because of lack of working capital.

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HERE is some interesting Matting news. We have some considerable amount of Mattings in short lengths and single rolls on hand, which we desire to clear out at once to make room for tremendous Carpet arrivals now piling in on us. These remnants are the remains of some of our best selling patterns, and range in length from two yards to forty yards. In the majority of cases, you will find enough in a piece to cover a fair-sized bedroom. This is an excellent chance to procure some fine Floor Coverings for the summer cottage or the camp. It will not be so very long until preparations will commence for the annual migration, and you'll need some such material then. The money saved on buying these now will more than compensate you for storing them until then, and will prove an excellent investment. Come up to our second floor, and let us show you some of these remnants and see what interesting values we are offering. It is just a case of changing the storage of these. We need the room for other lines, and you need the Matting—at least, you soon shall need it.

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Almost a dozen new lines of Dinner Services have been added of late and our offerings today in low-priced services in artistic and attractive decorations is unusually good. We list here a few of the offerings and you are safe in choosing any of these. They are all splendid styles and excellent values at the prices quoted. Come in and see them or order by mail—you are safe in doing so.

DINNER SERVICE—In semi-porcelain. A very neat and pretty floral decoration. 97 pieces. Special value at, per set **$8.50**

DINNER SERVICE—A "stock" pattern in a pretty blue rose decoration. There are 114 pieces in this set. Matchings from stock at any time, **$13.50**

DINNER SERVICE—One of the newest decorations. A tulip in blue with lots of gold as well, 96 pieces of newness for **$14.00**

DINNER SERVICE—In semi-porcelain, 96 pieces in a very pretty green and gold carnation decoration Neat and pretty Per set **$14.00**

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DINNER SERVICE—Here is one of our daintiest sets A pretty pink rose and wreath of gold makes a pleasing decoration 102 pieces Per set **$18.00**

DINNER SERVICE — Another 102-piece set in semi-porcelain. Dark green, orange and gold, make a very attractive decoration on this. Per set **$20.00**

DINNER SERVICE—Flown green, orange and gold on finest semi-porcelain makes this set a set worth special note. 102 pieces. Price, per set **$20.00**

DINNER SERVICE—A 107-piece service in light green and gold decoration. A really handsome style and excellent value at price marked. Per set **$25.00**

DINNER SERVICE—Another semi-porcelain set of 107 pieces. Flown blue and gold decoration. A set you'll be pleased with. Per set .. **$27.50**

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Here are four very special values in China Tea Sets worthy of your special investigation. These are odd sets we wish to clear out at once, and to that end we have considerably reduced the prices on these. You'll be pleased with the decorations and the quality of the ware—both are of the best quality. If you wish to secure a splendid China Tea Set at a special reduction see these. First floor.

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CHINA TEA SET—Here is a dainty set in blue which should appeal to those who favor blues. It is a pretty floral effort. Forty pieces, per set **$5.00**

CHINA TEA SET—This is a very handsome decoration in green and gilt. The design is very dainty, and the set at this price, genuinely good value, 40 pieces, per set **$5.00**

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Spring styles in Lace Curtains are now ready for your inspection on the second floor. Hundreds of pairs in more than a hundred new designs are on show and the showing is a worthy one indeed. You're welcome.

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BRITISH CRETONNE—In floral and conventional designs, that are bright and cheerful, we show a splendid range. Priced at, per yard, 35c, 30c and.. .. .. .. **25¢**

BRITISH CHINTZ—A very pretty and serviceable Chintz with artistic designs, in various colorings on a jaspar ground, has a softening influence on the whole effect. It makes the less liable to soil, yet does not detract from the daintiness. Price per yard .. .. **40¢**

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