The Colonist.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1897.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS.

The administration of public affairs in this province is proceeding with a smoothness that must be highly gratifying to the great majority of the people. An effort is being made by a section of the press to make it appear that profound dissatisfaction exists, but such papers do not even deceive themselves, not to speak of anyone else. So hollow are the attacks made upon the government that one is led to think the critics must be at fault, for it seems hardly credible that the very difficult task of conducting the business of a province like British Columbia could be carried on with so little friction and so little real complaint. But the more intimately acquainted one becomes with the manner in which the administration of affairs is conducted, the more impressed is he with the diligence, industry, good faith and, on the whole, excellent judgment exhibited, not only by the heads of the departments, but by the whole civil service. Year after year passes without anything approaching a scandal, without a case of misappropriation of public funds, without a single grave dereliction of duty or a serious mistake. We claim that this argues well for the administrative ability of the gentlemen who are at the head of affairs. We are not now referring to broad matters of policy, but to the general routine of the public business, and the reference is called out by the fact that the so-called Opposition platform contemplates a general overturn in the civil service.

The province of British Columbia is in one respect different from the other provinces of Canada. In the others municipal organizations of various kinds relieve the provincial authorities of a vast amount of work which here devolves upon the government. Take the matter of education. In the other provinces there are laws which direct the Board of Education to do such and such things with the public money, when the school districts, or whatever name they are called, do something on their part. The government has nothing to do with the matter except to see that the Board of Education does its duty. If a district wants a school house or a teacher, it makes its own arrangements, knowing that it will be entitled to public aid to a certain extent and under certain conditions. In most parts of this province the schools are administered directly from the department, and the Minister of Education is responsible. So as to roads; the municipalities in the other provinces either wholly or in part provide for these. In other provinces while the administration of justice is under the control of the Attorneys-General the actual work in the very great majority of cases is done by municipal officers without reference to him. In more ways than could conveniently be mentioned in a newspaper article the government of British Columbia is brought more closely into touch with the people than are the governments of the other provinces.

This system is the result of the sparsely settled condition of the province. It has been practically impossible to arrange a system of county or township government for the whole province; but we are of the opinion that before very long something of the kind will have to be undertaken for all the more populous districts, or otherwise there will be a mass of detail to be attended to by the government which will be beyond what can be dealt with satisfactorily without more than one increase in the number of ministers and a very large increase in the number of departmental officers. In order that there may be no misconception about what we are saying, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we are not speaking with the authority of the government or any member of it, but are giving only the result of our own observations.

One of the effects of the system in force in this Province is that it throws too many details upon the ministers. It is a fact, which one can see for himself, that the four salaried provincial ministers do work that in other provinces is done by chief clerks or deputy ministers. We venture to say that they attend to details as the members of no other provincial government do, and we believe that this close application to the routine work of their offices, though at present necessary, is not really best for the interests of the province. We believe that in the near future it will be found advisable for the provincial ministers to recast their plan of departmental work, so that they may have more time to move about the province and become familiar by personal observation with the requirements of the people.

The satisfactory condition of the public service counts for more in public opinion than the clamor of a few people, whose sole ground of complaint is that they are not able to feed at the public crib. There is at least one conspicuous illustration in this province of a public man and journalist, who was ready and willing to swallow all the sins of omission, all the sins of commission, all the botches and all the jobs, that the most ingenious opponent can lay to the charge of the administration, provided he could get a cabinet office. From the assaults of such opponents a government has little to fear, especially when it is entrenched behind a record of successful administration.

THE SURVEYOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE.

In the Golden Era appears a charge against the Surveyor-General. One allegation is that it took nearly four years to get through the survey of a farm. This is true. In the case referred to the farm was surveyed, and the surveyor included in it a piece of land covered by another claim, contrary to the Land Act, and offered no explanation for so doing. Notice was at once given by the Surveyor-General that an explanation was required. After nearly four years the explanation came to hand, and the proper order was at once made. It was the business of the grantee to expedite the explanation, if he was in a hurry. A second allegation is that the department does not furnish surveyors with copies of plans, but refers them to the nearest land office. This is not quite correct, but it was the course taken in the case referred to by the Golden Era. The Surveyor-General does not furnish copies of plans to the public on demand. The rule is to keep plans at the public expense for public convenience; but if individuals want copies for their own convenience, they must either make them themselves or pay someone else to do so. This is the practice in all public land departments. Usually some one of the clerks in the office makes copies asked for, using his own time after office hours to do so, and making a small charge for his trouble. In some cases, like that mentioned by the Golden paper, applicants are referred to the most convenient land office, where they can make their own copies, or have them made as suits them best.

The Golden Era threatens that great changes will be made in the Crown Land office when the new government comes in. We have only to say that if it is contemplated to increase the staff of that office so that it may attend to the private business of the whole community, an additional reason is afforded for keeping the opposition out.

THE TEMPLETON OPTION.

On September 11 the following appeared in the Nelson Tribune, being a portion of an interview with Mayor Templeton, of Vancouver:

"What do you think of the statements that Mr. Cotton is going to join the Cabinet?" was asked by the interviewer.

"I do not think it likely," replied Mr. Templeton. "Mr. Cotton could not be re-elected in Vancouver again, and he is under a written promise, which is in my possession, that he will not go into coalition with the present government without the consent of the party."

Commenting upon this, the Daily Times of this city said on the 16th inst.:

Assuming that Mr. Templeton has been correctly reported, representatives in the legislature who have been associated in opposition with the member for Vancouver must feel that they have occupied a humiliating position. Or were they "the party" whose consent was to be obtained before Mr. Cotton could coalesce with the Turner government? If so, they were cognizant of the existence of such a pledge, the existence of which would indicate a suspicion that the member for Vancouver had at one time entertained the idea of going over to the government. In view of the recent utterances of the COLONIST, which were understood to hint at a modus vivendi between Mr. Cotton and the government, the startling statement of the Mayor of Vancouver will deepen the interest in the political game. Necessarily, Mr. Cotton will be expected to explain why such a pledge was exacted from him.

To this very reasonable and very moderate statement of the case, neither Mr. Cotton nor his newspaper, the News-Advertiser, vouchsafed a word of reply, but permitted it to go on record, and be spread from one end of the province to the other that Mr. Templeton held Mr. Cotton's political future in his pocket. We venture to say that no more damaging statement was ever made against a public man, that is, speaking politically, of course, and that Mr. Cotton remained silent under it, for fifteen days after it was made public and for eleven days after his co-worker in opposition called on him to explain it, is as damaging to his political reputation as the statement itself.

On Sunday, the 26th inst., there appeared in the News-Advertiser a column and a half interview with Mr. Templeton and a short editorial purporting to deal with this matter. Both deserve a place among the curiosities of political literature. To understand the matter properly it is necessary to bear in mind that the Nelson Miner, in which the statement of Mr. Templeton appeared, was, and is, the most aggressive of the opposition weekly papers. When asked about the Miner's remarks, Mr. Templeton said:

I did not see the report until long after we left Nelson, or else I would have returned and spoken to the reporter again.

We note that Mr. Templeton here does not pretend to deny the substantial accuracy of the Miner interview, but, on the contrary, must be taken in using these words to endorse it as correct. Therefore the Times of this city was wholly justified in calling on him for an explanation, and the papers supporting the government were warranted in their comments. It also shows the absolute falsity of the following statement made by the News-Advertiser in regard to the last named papers:

They fastened with avidity on an item in a brief report of an interview in a Nelson paper with Mr. Templeton during his recent visit to that city, and from it constructed a most wonderful piece of fiction.

We say this is wholly untrue because all that was done by the papers referred to was to quote Mr. Templeton's language as reported in the Miner.

Having delivered himself of the above ratification of the Miner's report, Mr. Templeton devoted nearly a column to the matter, but no where did he say or even hint that Mr. Cotton was not pledged as stated in the Miner. On the contrary, he said:

Well, I said, moreover, Mr. Cotton is not free to enter the Cabinet. We have his written agreement, which practically ties him, and prevents him from pursuing any such course.

Then follows a very weak reference to a pledge signed by Mr. Cotton on May 9, 1894, and Mr. Templeton innocently goes on, after a lot of explanation which explains nothing, to say that he cannot conceive why the Nelson Miner's report should "be intended to mean more than it conveys." We submit that it has not been used by any one as conveying any more than it conveys, or any more than Mr. Templeton's statement, made under the coaching of the News-Advertiser, conveys. We also submit that, if this pledge was of the nature it is now represented to be, that is, a mere general pledge of opposition, the demand, made by the Times of this city and above quoted, is absolutely inexplicable.

We further submit that if Mr. Cotton was bound by any agreement made in 1894, not to enter the present government, he has shown himself to be a hundred times more disloyal than we ever imagined he could be. For his own political credit we hoped that the date of the option was some time in 1897. We say that if Mr. Cotton has been bound during the whole of the present year by a pledge, which he understood and which his associates understood prevented him from entering the ministry or doing anything that would contribute to its support, he is the most extraordinary sample of a public man that ever occupied a seat in a legislature.

A FAMILY QUARREL.

No one will be found to deny that the Nanaimo Review is a staunch Liberal paper and, we are sorry to say, opposed to the local government. For this reason its views on the proposal to run Provincial politics on Dominion lines are especially interesting. It begins a long article in its last issue by declaring that the movement had its origin in a "certain limited section of the Liberal press of British Columbia," but says that it fell very flat. We quote:

Fortunately, however, the better judgment both of Liberals and provincial oppositionists was against the calling of such a convention. So pronounced, indeed, did adverse opinion become, that these self-appointed conveners were compelled to belie their former preachings and claim that the proposed convention had nothing whatever to do with provincial politics. Assurances to this effect, however, notwithstanding that they are now frequently and vociferously made, are devoid of an atom of truth, and are only published in the hope that the bold and blatant denial will deceive a portion of the public who are not aware of the earlier manipulations.

The Review then goes on to declare that it would like to see an opposition meeting held, but believes such a convention as is proposed will cause division and distrust. For this opinion it gives the following reasons, which will be very interesting reading to the promoters of the convention:

Even if we credit the statement that the proposed meeting has no provincial significance—a statement which we have documentary evidence to prove is a falsehood—the convention is no more satisfactory. For a Liberal convention, as regards federal politics, at this juncture is quite unnecessary; in fact, we have neither read or heard of any reason being advanced for its call.

The Review then proceeds to let out some of the inner history of the movement which we reprint to let our Liberal readers know the views held by one of the ablest papers supporting their party, and incidentally to establish once more the unreliability of the Times, which stated a few days ago that the Vancouver World is the only Liberal paper that is opposed to the convention.

But the public have not only been denied any excuse for the convention—they are left absolutely in the dark as to the personality of the conveners. It is true that the Liberal representatives for the province at Ottawa were requested to call the convention, but it is equally true that the majority of them strongly advised against the move and have refused to countenance it. We know of no representative body of Liberals fathering the convention. The Kamloops Liberal Association, reflecting the nerve and energy of Editor Deane, of flunky fame, and well known here as a supporter of Hon. Theo. Davie in the last campaign, and the insulter of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his entertainers whilst in this city, has been busy in this matter, but the zeal of Editor Dean and the association is open to ready comment as unsatisfactory for many glaring reasons. Apart from this doubtful and sickly parentage, we know of none. Has no one connected with it the honesty or courage to father the puny thing. Is no prominent Liberal openly identified with it? If there is, who is he? Has Hewitt Bostock, M.P., taken upon himself the duty of calling it; or has it been done by William Templeman, Esq., or Dr. Walkem, M.P.P.? The public and the Liberal party have a right to know with whom they are dealing and what parties are endeavoring to secure a veiled purpose through this bastard convention.

We therefore ask on whose authority, at whose request and for what purpose is the convention called? These are questions that should be clearly answered before any Liberal is warranted in recognizing it. So long as there remains this suspicious silence on these points, we are pleased to note the complete indifference with which the overwhelming majority of Liberals throughout the province ignore the efforts of an insignificant few to magnify their own importance and boom their minority views and discredited friends.

We want no packed convention; no cut-and-dried resolutions; no catspaw play for a few ambitious schemers; no farce to bring ridicule and shame on the Liberal party.

AN UNWISE "SENTINEL."

When the COLONIST undertook first to reproduce and answer every specific charge made in the opposition press against the government and when afterwards it declared its intention, in the absence of such specific charges, to defend the record of the government, it did not engage to reply to everything the opposition press might see fit to print, in the absence of more interesting matter. That would involve an amount of re-threshing of old straw, which would render the columns of this paper as dull as those of its contemporaries in question are. Some times an exceptional case arises, as for example an editorial in a recent issue of the Kamloops Sentinel, most appropriately headed, "Audacious Mendacity." We should not have cared to be so rude to apply these words to anything which our esteemed contemporary might say, but politeness must give way to truth some times, and so we frankly admit that the Sentinel has very well described its own article.

Illustration No. 1 of this audacious mendacity is the statement that the general policy of the government is "to squander the public funds and to alienate the public lands." If it will help the Sentinel out any we will admit that this has been said very often, but frequent repetition, instead of making the statement true, only renders the mendacity more audacious. The Sentinel and its friends might vociferate until Doomsday that twice two are five, but this would in no way impugn the accuracy of the multiplication table. If the government's policy is to squander money, it ought not to be difficult to scare up one little "squander"; if the government's policy is to alienate the public lands, it ought not be very difficult to show in what way any proposed alienation has worked or is calculated to work injury to the province. We assume that the policy of every government will be to alienate the public domain, for it is of no good to anyone unless it is alienated. There will always be a question whether or not any proposed system of alienation is judicious, and this is a matter to be demonstrated in each case. So far as we have been able to follow the opposition criticisms, the critics have not thought it worth while to go into particulars.

Illustration No. 2 is the statement, put interrogatively, that the Attorney-General is responsible for faulty legislature, needless litigation and heavy expense. If this is true there must somewhere be some proof of it. We have repeatedly asked for the instances which the opposition have in mind when making this general statement. The answer has been to cite the case of the Victoria Lumber Company and that of the Koksilah Quarry Company. We have showed by incontrovertible evidence that in the first case the province saved a large amount of money and that the second case is yet before the courts, and we feel no hesitation in saying that the decision of the Privy Council will in all probability be favorable to the province.

Illustration No. 3 is the statement, also put interrogatively, to the effect that the administration of the educational department has not commended itself to anyone outside of Victoria. Our reply to this is that session after session of the legislature has passed and the administration of the educational department has yet to be unfavorably criticized. We do not say that from time to time instances of local dissatisfaction have not occurred, but we do say that in every case a bona fide effort has been made, and in nearly every instance successfully made, to meet the wishes of the people. The case of Rossland is the most recent in point, where a matter that caused very considerable hasty criticism has been arranged in a manner that has called forth warm expressions of satisfaction.

Illustration No. 4 is the statement that well-grounded complaints have been made against the lands and works department. We say that this is an illustration of mendacity, because it implies that complaints have been made against that department and that the department has not been shown to have had good reason for its action in the premises. We do not deny that complaints have been made against this department. The people in one locality complain because a bridge has not been built; in another because a road has not been built; in another it is the lack of a public building that is the cause of complaint. These things always have been and always will be, for the department of lands and works will probably never have enough money to do everything asked of it, or enough clerical help to do everything quite as soon as the man, who wants it done, thinks it ought to be done. By a well grounded complaint against a public department we understand one that implies neglect, carelessness or actual wrong-doing, and we say that no instances of this kind have been brought to light either in the legislature or out of it; and in saying this we do not overlook the much talked of Ruckles case, in which a committee of the legislature found there was nothing wrong.

Illustration No. 5 is the statement that the criticisms of the finance department are unanswerable. These criticisms have been answered categorically and with minute detail.

Illustration No. 6 is the statement that the COLONIST has not dealt with the charges preferred by the Sentinel. Our impression was that we took up each one of the Sentinel's charges as it was made; we do not say that we repeated our answers as often as the charges were repeated.

Finally, the Sentinel says that we will not "for good reasons" discuss its charges that the Attorney-General favors certain corporations. To this we replied, only to have our statements of opinion on questions of fact misrepresented as being statements of the law. But we again say—

1st. The courts of the land are open to every one, and the Attorney-General does not hold the key.

2nd. The Attorney-General is under an obligation to exercise his best judgment whether prosecutions ought to be instituted upon any set of facts. If he thinks a conviction cannot be secured, he is culpable if he puts the province to the expense of a prosecution.

In the cases referred to by the Sentinel we think the Attorney-General exercised a sound discretion.

THE SMASHING OF BRITAIN.

A report comes from St. Petersburg to the effect that the governments of Russia, France, Germany, Italy and Turkey have arrived at the conclusion that the time has come for Great Britain to get out of Egypt. We take very little stock in the story. These nations are not at all likely to agree upon any plan of action, and even if they should do so, they would find that suggested more difficult than they imagine. It is stated that the Empire is to be divided up according to an agreement alleged to have been arrived at by the aforesaid governments.

We are not at all anxious to see the experiment tried, but if it ever is, and the British Empire must face all Europe in arms, the result will be something very different to what the enemies of liberty imagine. If Great Britain could be crushed, the republic in France would be quickly annihilated and all Continental Europe would be plunged into an abyss of imperialism. But the time for such reaction is not at hand, and long before the plans of the absolutists of Russia and Germany could succeed, the whole continent would be in an uproar. Germany is to-day only a slumbering volcano. It has been repeatedly said that only the life of an old man stands between the Austro-Hungarian empire and political chaos. The Emperor Franz-Josef is in his 68th year and shows signs of increasing age. M. de Blowitz, the famous Paris correspondent of the London Times, is on record with a prediction that on the death of the Emperor his dominions will fly asunder as if there were an explosion. Signs of this are everywhere manifest. The German element of the population is avowedly hostile to the others, and Hungary is extremely restive under her partnership with Austria. Russia is ripe for rebellion under favorable conditions, and these are likely to occur if a great foreign war breaks out. Indeed, look in whatever direction over continental Europe we may, we find, except in Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, discontent ripening for a terrible harvest.

If the Continental powers should determine to attack Great Britain they would find their aggressive capacity as against her very much less than some people imagine. They would not be able, for example, to drive the British out of Egypt. They could not land troops there, while the British army of occupation could be reinforced if necessary from India. It is all very well to string figures on paper to represent the fighting force of the Continental powers, but it is to be remembered that all their armies are organized for campaigns in which their own countries will be a basis of supply. The experience of France in Tonquin and Madagascar show how poorly equipped that that great military nation is to carry on operations beyond seas. Germans will fight for the Fatherland, but when it is proposed to send the youth of the country into foreign lands to fight the battles of tyranny, there will likely be another story to tell. Russia has a vast army, but Turkey held it at bay for a long time. Austria has never yet accomplished or, indeed, attempted anything outside of Europe, and as for Italy, the day that a King of Italy calls on the people to fight Great Britain he will forfeit his crown.

Looking at the whole situation, we conclude that the new scheme to smash the Empire is simply an expression of the disgust which Russia feels at finding that her plans in regard to Greece and Turkey have been blocked by Great Britain.

900 DROPS

CASTORIA

A Vegetable Preparation for Assimilating the Food and Regulating the Stomachs and Bowels of

INFANTS CHILDREN

Promotes Digestion, Cheerfulness and Rest. Contains neither Opium, Morphine nor Mineral. NOT NARCOTIC.

Recipe of Old Dr SAMUEL PITCHER

A perfect Remedy for Constipation, Sour Stomach, Diarrhœa, Worms, Convulsions, Feverishness and LOSS OF SLEEP.

Fac Simile Signature of

NEW YORK.

At 6 months old

35 DOSES – 35 CENTS

EXACT COPY OF WRAPPER.

SEE THAT THE FAC-SIMILE SIGNATURE —OF— Chas. H. Fletcher. IS ON THE WRAPPER OF EVERY BOTTLE OF

CASTORIA

Castoria is put up in one-size bottles only. It is not sold in bulk. Don't allow anyone to sell you anything else on the plea or promise that it is "just as good" and "will answer every purpose." See that you get C-A-S-T-O-R-I-A.

The fac-simile signature Chas. H. Fletcher. is on every wrapper.

Wrecked.

That is where we will be for the Klondyke trade if a move is not made to let the World know Victoria has an existence. With Railroad terminals in other cities, Australian line of steamers passing by, Victoria can be sidetracked.

WE WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT THE

Dixi Ham and Bacon

is certified by Government Inspector to be free from disease.

Port Wine, made in Canada, absolutely pure juice of the grape, 40 cts. a bottle.

Morgan's Eastern Oysters, in shell and tin, are seasonable.

Dixi H. Ross & Co.

Boys' Stockings

That you will not have to darn the first time they are worn. This line is pronounced by all who have used them to be without an equal for wear,

50c., 60c. and 75c. a pair.

Gilmore & McCandless,

35 AND 37 JOHNSON STREET.

E. G. PRIOR & CO., Ld. Ly

ESTABLISHED 1859.

DEALERS IN

Miners, Loggers and Mill Supplies

BUILDERS' HARDWARE AND TOOLS,
BAR AND SHEET IRON, JESSOP'S STEEL,
FARM IMPLEMENTS AND MACHINERY,
WAGONS, BUGGIES AND CARTS.

Headquarters, Victoria.

BRANCH STORES AT VANCOUVER & KAMLOOPS.