

The Colonist.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1898.

WISE MEN FROM THE EAST.

It is proverbial that wisdom comes from the East and we are having a little sample of it in British Columbia just now. There is an able-bodied rumor in circulation that the Hon. Joseph Martin is slated for the leadership of the government party, and that this ambition extends in that direction is very well known. Mr. Martin represents a class of Eastern gentlemen, who are consumed with compassion for this crude and ignorant West. They so soon cross the Rockies that their souls swell with in them at the sight of the fields already whitening for a harvest for their political ambitions. These excellent people need not distrust themselves unduly. This province with all the crudities and ignorance, which they so much pity, has managed to get along pretty well. It has managed to enact and wisely enforce the best mining laws known on the Continent of America. It has managed to establish and administer, under conditions of exceptional difficulty, the policing of a territory of vast proportions. It has managed to secure a good deal of needed railway construction. It has kept itself remarkably free from administrative scandals. It has advanced its financial credit to the very front rank. There are some people foolish enough to imagine that things would go along tolerably well, if the men, who have borne the burden and heat of the day in the past, were permitted to control the destinies of the province in the future. For some time to come we flatter that the people of British Columbia, without respect to their party affiliations, either in the provincial or federal arena, will see to it that the control of the affairs is kept in the hands of those, who have long been identified with its progress, and gentlemen, who, like Mr. Martin, hope to spend at least a single hour in the position of leadership, will have to learn to exercise the virtue of patience. Mr. Martin's present position is simply the result of an accident.

THOSE BLANK WARRANTS.

Certainly the Colonist did not expect that the alleged "blank warrants" matter would be disposed of by a single reference. In that it was mistaken. It made the mistake of supposing that no one would think that theft, falsification of public records and forgery would be committed by anyone in public life in British Columbia. In that respect it was badly mistaken. The Times believes that such crimes are possible, but it is alone in its foolishness.

It says that the Colonist has not explained why the so-called "blank warrants" were inserted in the lot sent to the Lieutenant-Governor for signature. A great part of a column was devoted to explaining why this was done, and by whom it was done. The Times simply states what is not true.

The Times says that the Colonist omitted from the form the words "Lieutenant-Governor" and the blank line on which he was to sign. This is true, but on the blank line the possession of the Colonist this line does not appear, but we did say that the Lieutenant-Governor signed the so-called warrants either at the end or the beginning of the series.

The Times insinuates that the existence of this blank shows that the signature of the Lieutenant-Governor was necessary. This is the first time we ever heard that constitutional practice was determined by a printed form. But that is immaterial. Here is a proposition which we defy the Times or any one else to contradict: Several blank forms were included among others sent to the Lieutenant-Governor for signature, and the Governor cut them out. In what the Times calls the "pile," which was not a "pile" at all, but a number of warrants fastened together, the whole forming one warrant, these blanks were placed, for the convenience of the Auditor-General. In the so-called "pile" there were about a hundred forms, but of the whole hundred the Lieutenant-Governor signed only one, namely, the last. We pronounce as wholly false the assertion that the blank warrants were sent up to the Lieutenant-Governor with the expectation that he would sign them inadvertently.

The Times sees fit to drag the Lieutenant-Governor's name into this matter, for which we are sure that official will not thank it, because he doubtless realizes by this time that he was entirely mistaken about the blank sheets which he tore out. What he stated in his letter was quite true. Blanks were included in a batch of what he calls warrants. He did not understand why they were included, which is not a matter of surprise, as he had no experience in such matters, and he doubtless realizes as fully as anyone else that it was a mistake to have mentioned the subject at all. The Times knows that it is endeavoring to create a false impression, and we are glad to see that the other organs of the government permit it to grovel alone in its silly flith.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE YUKON.

Mr. H. S. White, who has spent some months in the Yukon district as representative of Reuters News Agency, left Victoria on Tuesday night for London. He will stop at Ottawa en route, and will endeavor to get the ministers to understand what the nature of the complaints against the administration of the Yukon is, and what grounds exist for them. Mr. White is a wholly unprejudiced observer, and he represents a company, which has a reputation all over the world for its straightforwardness and thorough reliability. It is, therefore, with very

great regret that we find him conversing candidly with the constant of some of the Dominion officials at Dawson in very severe terms. As he fairly says, one has to be on the ground to appreciate how the injustices work. He is not much surprised that the federal authorities do not realize the magnitude of the harm being done, for they are doubtless unable to understand how the regulations and practices, seemingly innocent enough, work out grotesque injustices. Take one apparently small matter as an illustration. A prospector desires to know whether a certain piece of ground is eligible for staking, and he goes to the Gold Commissioner's office for that purpose. He finds the Commissioner an easy-going, agreeable sort of man, but he cannot attend to every one and the seeker for information is left to the tender mercy of a clerk. The clerk informs him that the public cannot see the records, and the prospector thinks the end of the matter. He is told, however, that if he is staked, why, let him stake it, and the office will examine into the matter and let him know after he has made his filing. But it is notorious that while information is refused at the front door, it can be got at the side door for a consideration. To one who is anything about the locating of placer claims, no explanation is necessary to show how great an injury may be done a man by reason of the practice of the office to refuse public inspection of the records, and that a door is opened for fraud of all kinds. It is not possible that the majority of people believe that the officials use their information to their personal advantage, and the difficulty of making charges and proving them becomes obvious. It ought, however, to be sufficient to point out that the door for fraud is wide open, and that in many cases great losses have been sustained by individuals, who had either too much honesty or too small "in-sack" to approach the side door. We claim that the records of filings and the records of claims should be as open to public inspection as the expenditures of business with general offices. Doubtless the apologists for the administration will say of such a complaint as the above, that it is a small matter; but that is just where they will be in error. It may mean to a man all the difference between a successful trip to Klondike and disastrous failure. The difficulties of the journey are sufficiently serious, the privations and discomforts to be endured on the ground are great enough, the chances of failure in prospecting are numerous enough, without a man having to run the gauntlet of official capidity or administrative stupidity.

We hope for the credit of Canada and in the interest of the future development of its northern gold fields, that the government will not delay the most thorough investigation into all reasonable causes of complaint, and will inaugurate at once such reforms in administration as will put all prospectors on an equal footing. The day of the "pull," of the influence of the "sack," and of "back-door" work cannot be terminated too soon, for the sake of the good name of the country and the opening up of the great wealth of the Yukon basin.

THE SEALERS' CLAIMS.

On several occasions the Colonist has spoken of the necessity of proper representations being made to the Ottawa government in regard to the suggested abolition of pelagic sealing. The way the matter is being allowed to drift is creating the impression in the East that the owners of the sealing vessels are compensated for the loss of the capital locked up in the business, nothing more need be done. This is a dangerous error, so far as the interests of this part of the Dominion are concerned. It is right that the vessel owners should be compensated. No settlement would be just, which did not include that, provided pelagic sealing is to be stopped; but this does not touch the case of the two thousand men, or so, who are dependent upon the industry for a livelihood, and will not compensate the general business of Victoria for the loss of trade.

THE SEALERS' CLAIMS.

The sealing industry is worth a great deal to this locality, and if it is to be stopped and nothing is to be done to take its place, the community will suffer severely, even if the vessel owners do not lose anything. The vicissitudes of the business are such that the owners would perhaps be rather more willing than not to get out of it, on being recompensed for their investments. But the public aspect of the case is of at least equal importance with the private one, and this has not been urged, so far as we know, upon the consideration of the federal government, except through the press.

The public aspect of the case is a matter which the provincial government might well take up. If they suffer the sealing industry to be exterminated without making a determined effort to re-organize for the province some adequate compensation for the resulting damage, they will be highly culpable. It would be very satisfactory to be able to record that steps have been taken to care for the rights of the province, and the Colonist will back up the administration in any well-considered effort it may make in this direction.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE YUKON.

The Montreal Gazette seems to have fallen into an error in regard to the proposed \$15,000 expenditure in Cassiar. This had no connection whatever with the election, and we all know that it would have been entirely too late for such a use, even if it had been so intended. As a matter of fact, one of the first acts of the Lieutenant-Governor after his new ministers came in was to sanction this expenditure. This wholly takes the political aspect out of it. As to the alleged systematic deception of which the Gazette speaks, if the late for them would be the penitentiary; but they did not so act, and now that the

actual history of those alleged blank warrants has been made public in the Colonist, we hope the Gazette, in justice to honorable men, will give the explanation the same publicity as it gave to the charge.

THE SEALING AWARD.

The money awarded by the sealing commission and appropriated by the Congress of the United States for the payment of the losses sustained by the sealers from illegal seizures, has been in the hands of the Dominion authorities for some time, and there it remains, without any definite time fixed for its distribution. Such information as we possess on the subject leads us to the conclusion that the whole blame for the delay rests on Ottawa, and as to say, the gentlemen in Victoria, who have had the care of the business for the government, have done their duty in the premises fully and promptly. It is not to get at the exact facts, but to get information to the effect that there is no good reason assigned why the amounts should not have been paid several weeks ago.

Seeing that many of the parties entitled to compensation have been kept out of their money for years, it seems inexplicable that there should be any further delay in paying them. Some have suggested that the reason for the delay is that Sir Louis Davies does not want to do anything in the matter, pending the Quebec conference. There may be some microscopic connection between the two, but it is not discernible to ordinary vision. Either the award or it was not, but the time has come to discuss this, for the money has been paid over by the United States, and to the average man it would appear that the retention by the Dominion government is a reflection upon the good faith of the sealers' claims than otherwise. Further compensation is to be asked for on the ground that pelagic sealing will be stopped by international agreement, and when the time comes to settle the amount of such compensation, we fancy the United States commissioners will not be averse to the fact that the Dominion government did not regard the claims of the sealers for the losses as sufficiently serious and pressing to call for the prompt payment of the several amounts awarded to them.

BRITISH COLUMBIA IN FEDERAL POLITICS.

No one need expect to form an independent party in British Columbia, so far as the federal parliament is concerned. The history of third parties in all countries is unfavorable to further experiments in that line. British Columbians must recognize the existence of the regular party lines, and seek to accomplish within them what they deem for the best advantage of the province. But when this has been said, all has not been said, for while it is true that the influence of British Columbia will be thrown into one or the other of the great parties, every effort ought to be made to see that British Columbia's interests are kept to the front.

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There is abroad in this province a distinct Coast spirit, and this ought to be asserted in the councils of both parties. This is not a sectional spirit in a narrow sense of the word. It owes its existence to the growing knowledge of the vast natural wealth of the province, and its commanding geographical position, which attract public attention in the eastern portion of the Dominion, and in other words, the personal side of the political contest hardly appeals to them at all. Nor are they very much concerned over details of public administration for the present.

BRITAIN AND GERMANY.

The Anglo-German agreement is a far-reaching affair. Read hastily, the impression is created that Great Britain got by very much the better of the bargain, but it is probably a far from one-sided arrangement. The alleged agreement by Great Britain to support Germany in any undertaking that may be reached with the Sultan, is by no means the least important part of the treaty. The Colonist pointed out some days ago that steady, though unobtrusive, steps were being taken by Germany to colonize the sea-coast of Turkey. Later information is that the colonists are doing exceedingly well. The desire of the Kaiser to convert Asia Minor and Syria into German provinces is only very thinly disguised. We think, however, that we see in the carrying out of this plan one dangerous point. Germany has no seaport on the Mediterranean, being cut off from it by the Tyrol, belonging to Austria, and Venetia, belonging to Italy. It would seem to be almost inevitable that if Germany is to have colonies in Turkey and Syria, she will not be content to have to go by the long route via Gibraltar to reach them. It is to be understood that, as far as Great Britain is concerned, the Kaiser is to have a free hand in securing an outlet to the Mediterranean? This seems to us to be the most serious part of the arrangement, regarded from a political standpoint.

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The recognition by Germany of British supremacy in South Africa leaves the Transvaal without a champion in its efforts to thwart those plans which the best friends of that interesting portion of the globe are endeavoring to carry out. The Transvaal, with its so-called republican form of government, is an anachronism. German support in the coming revision of the international agreement as to Egypt will be of great value, and will doubtless facilitate the permanent establishment of Britain there. The co-operation of the two countries in China will have the effect of restraining Russian pretensions, and

will doubtless save the ancient empire from dismemberment. From whatever aspect the agreement is regarded, its great importance will be recognized.

A SECTIONAL CRY.

Following its usual sectional tactics, the Vancouver Province is endeavoring to make it appear that the late Conservative convention was intended specially to promote certain Victoria interests. The Province knows perfectly well that this is not true, but its purpose at the present time seems, from its point of view, to be best served by creating an impression that the Conservatives of this city have some imaginary deep-laid plot directed against Vancouver. The idea of course is to create a local feeling, which may be of service to the Hon. Joseph Martin in the forthcoming election. There is, it is said, an intention on the part of some Vancouver people to put up a candidate against Mr. Martin, but the movement neither originated in Victoria nor does it receive any special backing here. If Mr. Martin can be defeated, there will not be many tears shed in Victoria on either side of the question of innocence, which is the rumor that even his colleagues in the cabinet would bear his loss with Christian fortitude. But with all this Victoria has nothing to do, and its interest in the election is quite apart from any local sentiment.

As far as the convention itself is concerned, no one who was present requires to be told that if one thing distinguished it more than another, it was the entire lack of sectional feeling. The delegates were animated by a single object, namely, to put their party on the best possible footing to organize for victory, and the work was well done. If it suits the purpose of the Province to keep harping upon the string, which it has twanged persistently during its short existence as a daily publication, and in doing so, there is no help for it, but there is some satisfaction in knowing that its case is so extremely attenuated that any one can see through it, and hence that no one will be deceived.

A TERRIBLE SCANDAL.

The mortality among United States soldiers at the present time is enormous. All accounts agree, the only difference being that each one is worse than those preceding it. Not only are the men dying in Cuba, but in the camps throughout the United States. Even down at San Francisco the death rate is startling. To read of the disregard of the commonest sanitary precautions is bad enough, but the instances of the grossest neglect of the sick and wounded are appalling. This was particularly conspicuous at Santiago, where the arrangements for the care of the wounded were infamous. Men were allowed to lie for hours, and sometimes for a whole day, without a change of position, without even so much as a drink of water. There were few surgeons to look after hundreds of sufferers, and though the doctors besetled did their duty, they were compelled to see, without being able to alleviate it, all manner of needless suffering. This was not because assistance was not offered. The Red Cross society came to the front with offers of aid, but the surgeon-general refused them on the ground that he wanted no women around. Red Cross nurses actually went to the hospitals, where men were awaiting in pain the attention of the physicians, and the Red Cross found their way to the front. There was no proper food. Bacon, beans and hardtack were all the commissariat had for men in the weakest physical condition. But this was not confined to Santiago, and let the government die at the Auditor-General's camp, where there were hundreds of men were suffering from dysentery, there was nothing for them to eat but the above articles.

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will doubtless save the ancient empire from dismemberment. From whatever aspect the agreement is regarded, its great importance will be recognized.

A SECTIONAL CRY.

Following its usual sectional tactics, the Vancouver Province is endeavoring to make it appear that the late Conservative convention was intended specially to promote certain Victoria interests. The Province knows perfectly well that this is not true, but its purpose at the present time seems, from its point of view, to be best served by creating an impression that the Conservatives of this city have some imaginary deep-laid plot directed against Vancouver. The idea of course is to create a local feeling, which may be of service to the Hon. Joseph Martin in the forthcoming election. There is, it is said, an intention on the part of some Vancouver people to put up a candidate against Mr. Martin, but the movement neither originated in Victoria nor does it receive any special backing here. If Mr. Martin can be defeated, there will not be many tears shed in Victoria on either side of the question of innocence, which is the rumor that even his colleagues in the cabinet would bear his loss with Christian fortitude. But with all this Victoria has nothing to do, and its interest in the election is quite apart from any local sentiment.

As far as the convention itself is concerned, no one who was present requires to be told that if one thing distinguished it more than another, it was the entire lack of sectional feeling. The delegates were animated by a single object, namely, to put their party on the best possible footing to organize for victory, and the work was well done. If it suits the purpose of the Province to keep harping upon the string, which it has twanged persistently during its short existence as a daily publication, and in doing so, there is no help for it, but there is some satisfaction in knowing that its case is so extremely attenuated that any one can see through it, and hence that no one will be deceived.

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The mortality among United States soldiers at the present time is enormous. All accounts agree, the only difference being that each one is worse than those preceding it. Not only are the men dying in Cuba, but in the camps throughout the United States. Even down at San Francisco the death rate is startling. To read of the disregard of the commonest sanitary precautions is bad enough, but the instances of the grossest neglect of the sick and wounded are appalling. This was particularly conspicuous at Santiago, where the arrangements for the care of the wounded were infamous. Men were allowed to lie for hours, and sometimes for a whole day, without a change of position, without even so much as a drink of water. There were few surgeons to look after hundreds of sufferers, and though the doctors besetled did their duty, they were compelled to see, without being able to alleviate it, all manner of needless suffering. This was not because assistance was not offered. The Red Cross society came to the front with offers of aid, but the surgeon-general refused them on the ground that he wanted no women around. Red Cross nurses actually went to the hospitals, where men were awaiting in pain the attention of the physicians, and the Red Cross found their way to the front. There was no proper food. Bacon, beans and hardtack were all the commissariat had for men in the weakest physical condition. But this was not confined to Santiago, and let the government die at the Auditor-General's camp, where there were hundreds of men were suffering from dysentery, there was nothing for them to eat but the above articles.

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Of course the people of the United States are aroused to a high pitch of indignation over the shameful neglect of the soldiers. The most troubling denunciations are published of those who are responsible for the fact, that the brave men, who volunteered to defend their country's flag, are in greater danger, now that peace exists, than they were when exposed to the bullets of the enemy. Probably in the last century there has not been a blacker story of neglect given to the world than can be found in any of the leading papers of the United States, which deal with this matter.

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