The Colonist.

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MR. SIFTON.

Experience teaches that it is not always well to accept the prognostications of the Opposition as to what the government may do. Governments do not, as a rule, tell their opponents their plans in advance of communicating them to their friends, and when an Opposition paper starts putting two and two together it is sometimes liable to make them come to five. Therefore, while the Mail and Empire makes out a pretty good prima facie case for the early entry of Mr. Clifford Sifton into the Cabinet, we think it somewhat premature to accept his appointment as a foregone conclusion. Nevertheless as a matter of passing interest and possible future importance, we give the Toronto paper's story for what it is worth. It says:

In the first place, the ex-Minister demands the Public Works portfolio. This gives control of a department which carries with it immense patronage and great influence, owing to the vast sums of money expended under its direction. Then Mr. Sifton insists that although not placed at the head of the Interior Department he shall have authority in that bureau. Prestige and power belong to the politician who distributes the lands, the timber and the mines. Finally, the reorganization of the Cabinet is called for. This proposition is a repetition of the ultimatum presented at the time George Graham was taken in. Three decapitations were then required; but as Sir Wilfrid was not prepared at that moment to make a general clean-up, the scheme was rejected.

Today the Sifton programme demands that four Ministers be dismissed. These are all Ontario men, namely: Sir Richard Cartwright, Mr. R. W. Scott, Mr. Aylesworth and Mr. Paterson. The two first, it is argued, ought to be dropped because of age, and because they are far removed from the party, and are in no sense leaders. The other two are attacked on the ground that they are wanting in magnetism and usefulness. Young, active and attractive men, according to Mr. Sifton, ought to take their places. But where the men to fill the bill are to be found, the ex-Minister does not say. Immediately that the session closes, certainly before an election is held, this question must be settled, and it looks very much as if the settlement will be made on the basis of the return of Sifton.

This is very interesting, and if true, very important. There is something to lend color to it. The government is hopelessly weak in Ontario, and the four gentlemen named, while of excellent personal repute, are hardly qualified to win the electorate of that province over to the support of the Liberal party. Sir Richard is yet a good deal of a fighter, but he suffers from physical infirmities and it is not of that quality of mind and disposition likely to attract the younger element of the voters of his province. Senator Scott is as fine an old gentleman as ever lived, but he too has reached a stage in life when he can hardly be counted upon to do much to extricate his political party out of the ditch into which it has fallen. Mr. Paterson has more to recommend him in point of vigor than his colleagues just named, but he too belongs to an older school than is likely to become dominant in Ontario politics. Mr. Aylesworth, though an exceedingly able man, is a good deal of a political failure. He is one of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's mistakes, for he does not possess the faculty of drawing people to him. Mr. Graham, Minister of Railways, is badly handicapped by such colleagues, and in the very vigorous fight that will have to be put up, unless the Liberals are going to be swept away by a political avalanche, it will be necessary to reenforce him in Ontario by younger and more attractive men. It must be conceded that, after allowing as much as possible for political principles, the personal equation counts for very much, and young men grow tired of working for a party in which all the avenues of promotion are blocked by persons, who might seriously consider if their public usefulness has not gone. Therefore, it seems as if the Mail and Empire cannot be far astray in thinking a very decided cabinet reorganization is not very far away.

As for Mr. Sifton himself, he has exhibited during the past few years an activity and reticence, which are calculated to set one guessing as to his future intentions. They are quite reconcilable with a determination to remain in private life, and possibly the enthusiastic Westerner may prefer to play the role of kingmaker rather than be king.

NEEDLESS ALARM.

Mr. Louis Corbally writes to the London National Review to express his fear that Canada is becoming Americanized. He finds the press American in form and matter; that we use American slang, get our cables via New York and use supplements got up in the United States; that we use American money and eat peanuts; that hotels, drinks, cigars and pastimes are Americanized and that we celebrate the Fourth of July. This is a terrible state of things, with just enough truth in it to mislead a superficial observer, and just enough nonsense to make it all absurd. Let us take up his grievances seriatim. First as to the newspapers. They are American in form; that is to say the general make-up of newspapers all over the Continent of North America is the same, but Canada does not copy from the United States any more than the United States copies from Canada. We are a busy people in America, or at least we think we are, at any rate we are always in a hurry about something, and we must have our newspapers got up so that we can take in the salient points at a glance. Canadian editorials for example, run to short paragraphs and brief articles. Every editor feels somewhat ashamed of himself if he takes up a column with an editorial on current questions. He has to do it sometimes when he is in a hurry, for, to let the public into a secret, it is a great deal easier to fill a column with one article than it is to fill half a column with paragraphs. So with our news, often it is not very important, so we make it look as if it were, and that's about the same thing. As to slang, we do not in Canadian papers use much of it, except on their sporting pages, and we can assure Mr. Corbally that a live sporting editor makes up his slang as he goes along. As for what he calls "Yankee supplements" he is very much astray, for very few of the leading Canadian papers use them. Unfortunately as yet much of the British news comes over New York. The statement that United States currency is used is misleading. A little United States currency is in circulation, but this is inevitable from the close intercourse of the two countries. We do eat peanuts, but so also do the elephants in the circus. As for our hotels and the other things mentioned, we make them to suit existing conditions, and if they are more like what similar things are in the United States than like those in England, the answer seems to be that existing conditions in Canada are necessarily more like what they are in the United States than what they are in England. As to the celebration of the Fourth of July, the answer is that Canadians do not celebrate it. A few people from the United States do so sometimes, but so also do they in London. The process of Americanization is chiefly imaginary. There is a little of it, just as there is a little Frenchification in England and a little Anglification of France, and a good deal of Occidentalization of the Orient; but long after Mr. Corbally has been gathered to his fathers, the Dominion of Canada will remain distinct from the United States, for it is developing a character of its own, and here will, we confidently trust, be found in the years to come the best expression of those qualities which are the heritage of the Anglo-Saxon race.

ABOUT ACCENT.

When the Duke of York visited Victoria a surprised lady, after hearing him speak, said: "He talks just like us." She had evidently been led to expect that the King's English as spoken by the King's son would be something quite different from the same speech in the mouths of ordinary folk. We do not know how it is with other languages, because one has to be very familiar with them to note the shades of accent, but English, as spoken, has very many varieties. There are certain broad distinctions. It is generally possible to detect from the voice whether or not any person was born in England. Every letter may be sounded just as a native of Canada sounds it, but there is a quality of tone, which people born in England seem to have naturally, and education or culture has nothing to do with it, for it is found in persons in every walk of life. The people of Eastern Canada and those of New York speak very much alike and they and the general run of English business men speak so nearly similarly that it is not easy to distinguish between them, except that the Englishman's tone is a little softer, the New Yorker's a little more crisp and the Eastern Canadian's a little more careless. Yet one might easily be mistaken for the other. In Massachusetts and the Middle West, and also to a greater extent on the Pacific Coast of the United States, there is a disposition to be a slave to the letters, people forgetting that language antedates the dictionary, and that spelling is only an imperfect expedient to convey the sound of speech. The varieties of English speech are many. We all know the people who call a cow "kyow," and who tell you that they live in such-and-such "kyounty." Some of them live in the United States, but some of them were born and brought up in England. Then we have the high head tones of some English people, which is not so much unlike the nasal twang of the down-east Yankee as they may think. Down in the Southern States they have softened the language until there is hardly a trace of an "r" in it except at the beginning of a word. How much of this due to the fact that for generations southern children were brought up by negro "mammies," it would be ungenerous to inquire. Sometimes people wonder at the existence of the peculiar dialects of some of the English shires, but they are not more surprising than that many people of Connecticutt pronounce the letter "r" when it occurs in the middle of a word as though it were a "y." Thus "north" becomes "noyth," fourth "fouyth" and so on; while down in the mountain of Tennessee they talk of we-all and you-all. There seems to be some influence in locality upon speech. The aboriginal Indian used to convey his meaning some years ago set the clocks half an hour back in order to establish a standard time, and the consequence is says the Buenos Ayres Herald, that the gas and electric light companies have made more money than they ought to have made. Now there is an effort on foot to go back to the former time, sometimes by a grunt, which meant yes or no according to the way it was emitted. Tens of thousands of people in the United States do the same thing today. English "as she is spoke" varies pretty widely. A conversation between, say, the Archbishop of Canterbury and a representative of the tough element in First Ward, Seattle, if each used his ordinary form of speech, would seem to a by-stander like one in different languages, not only as to accent but also as to words.

LABOR IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

The report in the June issue of the Labor Gazette upon the condition of the labor market in Victoria is very satisfactory. It is quite as favorable as that from any other city in Canada. Mr. Ditchburn, the correspondent says: "During the past month labor has been well employed, practically all the industries have been run to full capacity. All the surplus labor was not employed and the city yet contained a number of unemployed men." He attributes this in part to the delay in proceeding with certain municipal improvements. He closes his general report with the following paragraph: "A new industry has recently been started by the B. C. Foundry Co., of Esquimalt, for the manufacture of Manganese bronze to be moulded into blades for propellers. Local bank clearings for April were $4,634,089, as compared with $4,290,782 for the month of March. For the first four months of the present year the aggregate clearings were $17,588,687, compared with $16,274,249 for the same four months of last year. Both wholesale and retail trade were in a healthy condition."

His resume of the conditions of the several lines of industry in the city and vicinity seems to be very accurate, and it is on the whole exceedingly encouraging. Mr. A. H. Spencer, the Nanaimo correspondent, reports that there are still a good many unemployed people in his district, which he explains by the diminution of lumbering operations and the reduction of the coal output. Mr. Geo. Bartley, writing from Vancouver, says that the condition of the labor market on the whole was not satisfactory, and he does not regard the prospects for the future as encouraging. He reports a marked improvement in the financial situation. Mr. D. J. Stewart, the New Westminster correspondent, reports the labor market as fairly active and says that there are few white men out of work. He thinks the lumber market is improving and that the prospects for the future in that line are good. Mr. A. B. Docksteader, writing from Nelson, says there was still a surplus of men, although he noted a marked improvement. The condition of the lumber trade is slowly becoming more satisfactory and he thus thinks there has been a substantial increase in business generally. These are all the reports from British Columbia, and as will be noted, they are all encouraging except that from Vancouver, where probably the influx from other places of people looking for work has rendered the showing somewhat unsatisfactory.

A MATTER OF TIME.

A London despatch announced yesterday that the Bill to provide for advancing the clocks one hour, so as to give the public one hour more of daylight in which to be up and around, attending either to business or pleasure, has received the unanimous endorsement of the special committee to which it was referred. This makes it probable that, unless the Lords decline to get up earlier in the morning, the proposed change will come into effect next year. The arrangement looks like a very sensible one. As a matter of fact none of us knows just what time it is. We go according to the clocks, and when the hands point to a certain hour we say it is that hour. If all the clocks and watches in Victoria should, by common action and without any one's knowledge, move ahead an hour we would get up tomorrow an hour earlier without ever knowing it. When standard time was introduced there were many serious objections. We recall how one estimable Anglican bishop in an eastern province, refused positively to permit his cathedral clock to be altered, and to this day it goes on pealing out the quarters and striking the hours just twenty-five minutes after every other timepiece in town has made the same announcements. This good bishop was rather inclined to think that to change the hours savored a little of irreverence. Just here for variety's sake and because it is not well to be serious always, a little true story. A party of people were crossing the continent on the Canadian Pacific, and all of them except two ladies changed their watches to correspond with the railway time. These ladies had a little clock on the window sill of their section, and as the train neared Vancouver, a fellow passenger suggested that they ought to set their clock right, whereupon one of them answered: "I know you say it is three o'clock here, but our clock has the real time, for we set it in Boston."

There are many things in favor of the proposed change. If we set our clocks an hour ahead, it would really make very little difference in the morning, except in midwinter, but it would always be an advantage in the evening. Nowadays, it is not dark at 10 p.m., under the proposed arrangement, supposing it were made applicable to this country, it would not be dark until eleven. We would continue to go to work at the same hour by the clock as we go now and go to bed by the same hour; but as a matter of fact we would be an hour earlier at both ends of the day. The working man would stop work at 5 o'clock as now, but in midsummer he would have five hours' daylight left, instead of only four, and in the winter he would always be home before dark, even in the shortest days. The arrangement is a device to remove one of the daylight hours of the morning, which very few people use, over to the evening, when every one can use it. It is a beautiful arrangement.

JAPANESE IMMIGRATION.

Baron Hagura Takahasi, the Japanese envoy, who was sent to this country and the United States to examine into the working out of Japanese immigration, says that he will report to his government that the influx of his fellow counrymen to Pacific coast cities will jeopardize the friendly relation between Japan and the American countries, which he has visited. He says: "In some cases it is actually an intrusion so far as concerns the people who labor on the liberties and rights of the people who already inhabit those cities." He is therefore going to advise his government that only those persons shall be allowed to emigrate from Japan, who have sufficient money to enable them to go east of the Rocky Mountains and settle in the agricultural regions. This view of the case bears out what the Colonist has already contended for. At a time when rigid exclusion tactics were being advised, and a good many people were crying out for the abrogation of the treaty with Japan so far as it relates to Canada, we counselled moderation. We said that it would be well to see what Japan would do. We refused to look upon the Anglo-Japanese alliance as solely for the benefit of Great Britain, or to admit that the trade advantages were only on one side. We contended that it was just as much to the advantage of Japan to preserve friendly relations between the two countries as it was to ours, and therefore we claimed that it was well to make haste slowly. For this reason we commended the mission of Mr. Lemieux, and declined to join with those who condemned the understanding reached by him with the Japanese government. The question seemtd too serious to be made a political football, and while we have never hesitated to condemn the present Dominion government for its extraordinary lack of foresight in not dealing with the Oriental question as a whole at a time when no treaty obligations were involved, we recognized that the only thing that could now be done was to see what would come of friendly discussion and an intelligent study of the whole question. We said months ago that the unsuitability of Japanese as immigrants to the Pacific Coast would be apparent to the Japanese themselves, whence once they had looked thoroughly into the matter, and this we now see has proved to be the case. Just how welcome Japanese will be on the prairies remains to be seen. It is difficult to see how any objection can be made to the entrance into Canada of a Japanese with plenty of money with which to buy himself a home in the prairie region. Our present view of the case is that such people will not come in sufficient numbers to make their presence in the country a matter of any particular moment one way or another. Nothing short of a policy of non-intercourse could restrict such immigration as that, and few people in Canada are willing to go to such a length.

PERSIA.

The news from Persia occupies such a prominent place nowadays and there is such an imminent probability that serious changes may take place in that part of the world, that a few facts bearing upon the country may advantageously be given here.

Persia lies between Turkey in Asia on the west and Afghanistan and Beluchistan on the east. Its northern frontier is limited by the Russian provinces known as Transcaucasia and Transcaspia, and by the southern shore of the Caspian sea. On the south Persia is washed by the Persian Gulf and the northwesterly part of the Arabian Sea. Its area is 642,000 square miles, that is, it is somewhat less than twice the area of the mainland of British Columbia. It has a population of about 10,000,000, very much the greater number of whom live in the cities. The largest city is Teheran, which has a population of 250,000, the next in size being Tabriz, which is the centre of the present disturbances, and has to population of 180,000. Tabriz is situated in the northwestern part of Persia, and not far from the Russian frontier. It is therefore within the Russian sphere of influence as defined by the treaty between that country and Great Britain. Teheran, the capital, also lies within the same sphere, which fact will account for the greater activity of the Russians in connection with the political disturbances. The country is capable of maintaining a large population, but only under settled government. About two millions of the people live nomadic lives, the Turks being the most numerous, although the Kurds are not much less in number. Tabriz is situated in the country most frequented by the Kurds, and presumably Rachin Khan, who is said to be threatening the city with his horsemen, is one of this tribe. They are a fierce, warlike and cruel race, living in the mountains in the eastern provinces of Turkey, number in the whole about 2,000,000. If the present troubles eventuate in a Kurdish uprising, Russia will have a very serious problem on her hands, for while Rachin Khan is said to be favorable to the Shah, that does not imply that the Kurds will support a settled government, and means nothing more than an excuse for incursions, having robbery as their real motive. The present dynasty has occupied the Persian throne since 1795, and during its period of rule the country has lost a considerable of its territory. The province of Khorassan, which is the scene in which so many Persian romances are laid, occupies the eastern and northeastern part of the empire. Moore in Lalla Rookh speaks of it as

"That delightful province of the sun,
The first of Persian lands he shines upon."

So Peary is off again to chase the elusive pole.

The Vancouver World has begun to agitate for cheaper fares between that city and Vancouver Island points. There is room for a reduction.

A movement will be initiated to suppress the opium traffic in Canada. Most people will wonder why a similar proceeding was not taken long ago.

Thirty grain elevators are in course of erection along the line of the Grand Trunk Pacific railway west of Winnipeg, as far as Saskatoon. As somebody remarked on a previous occasion, "this is Canada's growing time."

When royalty feels safe enough to travel in airships the ordinary individual will be inclined to think that that method of getting about has "arrived." Count Zeppelin appears to have accomplished the impossible.

Bulletin No. 23, third edition, issued by the Provincial Bureau of Information, deals with the resources of British Columbia, and its chief industries. It is an exceedingly useful publication and ought to be very widely distributed.

The Canadian Northern continues to work out its objects in its own way. Its new line to Sudbury is an important branch. British Columbia will welcome the advent of this enterprising company.

At the request of the Prince of Wales a contingent of the Northwest Mounted Police will be sent to Quebec to act as the personal bodyguard of His Royal Highness. This is very high compliment to what has been properly described as "the finest police force in the world."

Japanese sealers are busy in Behring Sea and local vessels are straining at their anchors in Victoria harbor. British diplomacy did not have this in mind when it set to work framing new regulations, but this is the net result, all the same.

We see from an editorial in the Vancouver World that the "free port" project launched in that city is after the Montreal plan. It would be a fine thing for Vancouver, as it would be a fine thing for Montreal, but when it comes to a "free port district" on the Pacific coast of Canada, Vancouver Island will have something to say about it.

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IT IS extravagant to keep good music around your drawing room when, for a very few dollars, we can sell you a very handsome cabinet that will protect your music, collated on shelves easy to get at; in addition, our cabinets are solidly handsome pieces of furniture—they last and look well all the time.

WHATEVER style of furniture predominates in your drawing room, den or boudoir we can sell you a dainty and useful desk to match that style, be it Early English, Mahogany, Golden Oak, Mission or Ecclesiastical, the price is a bagatelle compared with the convenience and saving of time. Or, perhaps your library requires a good table to complete its usefulness—one with shelves for books, papers and magazines, in Early English design. On our third floor you will find an excellent selection. Prices range from $22.50 to $40, or our factory can build you one to your own or your architect's specification.

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