

The Colonist.

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A. G. SARGISON, Managing Director

THE DAILY COLONIST

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THE WATERWORKS AGREEMENT.

With reference to the article of yesterday's issue dealing with the subject of the preliminary agreement between the city and the B. C. Electric Railway Company for supplying the latter power, Mayor Barnard desires to make it plain that there is a strong financial reason for its having been entered into. The amount involved in the scheme, if carried out, is very large, and it would be useless to go before the ratepayers with a bill increasing the city's liability to such an extent, unless it could be shown that it also provides for a definite and sufficient revenue. He and the other members of the council responsible for the agreement consider it a wise precaution to have gone to the company and got an agreement beforehand which would make that revenue a certainty. There are other sources of power on the island besides Goldstream and these are being considered by the company in case the present agreement is not confirmed. In the absence of such agreement, after passing the bylaw, the city might be without the best customer and the only large customer it would have outside of its own consumers. It is true that the agreement is in the nature of monopoly, but so far as Goldstream is concerned the Mayor maintains that it is the pitting of one monopoly against the other, and it is for the ratepayers to decide which one they prefer. It is a very big question and a very difficult one to handle in the best interests of Victoria, and the Mayor and council, whether they are right or wrong, undoubtedly acted in what they considered the best way to conserve those interests. The money feature of the proposal is a serious one. The liabilities of the city are already very large for the population. The cost of education, with which we deal elsewhere, is considerable and steadily growing. There are many requirements in the way of public improvements. The Mayor, therefore, thinks that from a financial point of view, the improvement of the waterworks system in a comprehensive and satisfactory way should involve a source of revenue sufficiently large to justify it. Without that definitely in sight the chances of passing a money bylaw providing for the expenditure of at least one million dollars would be slim. Mayor Barnard also justifies the making of a "secret" agreement by the grounds that it was not good policy to make known the steps that were being taken, until the council had the bargain concluded. He claims, too, that the very best bargain possible was made with the company. The foregoing, we think, is a fair statement in a general way of the Mayor's position, regarding which there are many who hold a good deal of misconception, and which, in justice to him, should be made plain.

LOCAL COST OF EDUCATION.

The cost of education in Victoria is large, and growing larger all the time. In fact, the rate of increase is such as to cause apprehension in the minds of many as to the result of it all. We do not say it is too high. The importance of education is considered to be sufficient to justify the cost. Whether that be true or not is a matter each man must settle for himself. We wish, however, to call attention to the facts of the case.

The total expenditure for education in Victoria for the last three years has been:

In 1902	\$86,138
In 1903	78,963
In 1904	71,083

For the current year the estimates of the school trustees are \$83,083. Salaries have increased from \$45,880 to \$60,900. At the same time, the per capita grant which the city gets from the Government has not been increasing in the same proportion. In fact it was less in 1904 than in 1903. For three years the figures are:

1902	\$32,415
1903	35,530
1904	33,276

It is claimed that there is a special reason for the drop last year, and that it will come up again. It is stated, too, that the yearly increase of pupils is about 100, not sufficient, some think, to justify the rate of increase in expenditure, which was \$4,000 in one year and over \$14,000 in four years. It must not be lost sight of that we have a very efficient board of school trustees, and that our schools are modern in spirit and efficiently handled by the staff of teachers. In their zeal to make them as good as can be shown by comparison elsewhere in the Dominion, the trustees have increased the expenditure accordingly. Whether the public is getting results of a practical and useful nature to justify it is a matter for each man to decide. As for school systems go we believe we have as good as any in Canada, and the justification of its cost

depends upon the point of view the reader takes. The Colonist has expressed its views of the nature of some of the things that are in the curriculum, and while it has its own views on the subject generally, has no desire to say that the defenders of present day systems are necessarily wrong. They are evidently still strongly in the majority or we should not have called attention to the expense of the community involved. Because the cost is high, however, it ought not to be a ground of objection. The question is whether the results of all this school going are what they should be; and in Victoria the cost is sufficient to cause the ratepayers to seriously consider that phase of the case.

WHAT THE ELECTION MEANS.

The Winnipeg Commercial has an editorial on the result of the Ontario elections which contains some rather meaty observations. It says that it was more than a mere partisan victory for the Conservatives. "Its significance is not so much that the Conservatives won, and the Liberals were defeated. It was the inevitable revolt against grafting and corruption; it was an emphatic declaration by the people of that Province that the Premier must either be held responsible for any extensive corrupt practice by the party benches, or have such abuses summarily put down. While G. W. Ross deplored certain disgraceful irregularities, to use a familiar euphemism, during his administration, he claimed his own hands were clean. The party organs of the great capital of his personal reputation for being 'straight,' but Ontario has at length declared that the alleged 'straightness' of its leader is no justification for the returning of a corrupt government to power, especially when the leader in question has shown himself unable to cut loose from the corrupt influence."

That is a very excellent epitome of some of the reasons for the defeat of the Ross Government. The Commercial refers to the principles upon which it came about as "a straight business proposition." Mr. Ross did not, or could not, deliver the goods he had promised to the people. It adds another, which it claims contributed materially to Ross's defeat.

THE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE.

We are in receipt of the thirty-seventh annual report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries for 1904. It deals, however, with marine matters only, the fisheries being dealt with in a separate volume. The subjects which come under the control and management of the department are very numerous and important. They are lightships and the various other aids to navigation, such as hydrographic surveys, buoys and beacons, lifeboat stations, signal service, wireless telegraphy, Dominion steamers, steamboat inspection, coasting trade, pilotage, examination of mariners, marine hospitals, etc., etc. The report in question contains an account of an expedition to Hudson Bay and the Arctic islands. Naturally the account of such an expedition should be interesting on account of the important object in view. Unfortunately for this purpose, it is made up of particulars of the character of a diary, which are very minute but of little practical value. We understand that Mr. Lowe is making another report for the annual report of the Geological Survey, in which no doubt the important results will be summarized. The volume this year has a number of half-tone illustrations, which adds to its interest and value. For instance, there is a picture of the new Canadian armed cruiser "Gowanus," which is the nucleus of the Canadian navy. She has a speed of 22 miles per hour and an armament of four automatic quick-firing guns. It is understood to be the intention that this vessel should make a cruise to the West Indies during the winter, and, if possible, have her attached to the North American squadron, something, however, which does not seem to favor in the eyes of the Admiralty. The object of that, of course, would be to give the crew a training in the regular service. The Dominion Government has now 23 steamers in its service, besides 13 tugs, the cost of maintenance being in excess of \$300,000. It is interesting to note that the developments in connection with wireless telegraphy and submarine signalling have received careful consideration, and much, we are informed, has been done in the way of utilizing them in the interests of navigation. Last year the hydrographic survey work formerly in charge of the Department of Public Works, and also the survey of the Pacific, was taken over, and in this respect increased attention is being paid to British Columbia, the waters of which have been very imperfectly charted. On the whole the report shows that the Minister of Marine and Fisheries has very important department to administer. Over \$2,150,000 was expended last year by him in all branches of the service.

THE DOMINION EXHIBITION.

New Westminster, in undertaking to hold a Dominion Exhibition this year, has assumed a large responsibility. To make the necessary preparations and provide all the facilities for a big fair is but little thing. The details of management are in themselves a large task. The importance of making it a success is great. It is greater this year than it otherwise would be, on account of the fact that the Portland exposition is being held, and arrangements are in progress for bringing the Eastern visitor to British Columbia, so that he can see both shows and both countries at the same time. We cannot hope to rival the Lewis and Clark fair, which has large appropriations and has been under way for some time; but it is incumbent upon us as a Province to make as good a show as possible. It is no longer New Westminster or Westminister district that

must be considered. It is a Provincial matter and every part of the Province should feel the necessity of doing its utmost to contribute to the success. The credit of the whole Province is at stake. It has been suggested that the other shows of the Province should be given up this year in order that the whole energies of the people may be concentrated on this one. There are arguments both for and against holding the other fairs in the circumstances. The dates of the latter should at least be so fixed as to best conserve the interests of the Dominion Exhibition. Therefore local interests to consider, and a good many would possibly object to abandoning the Victoria Exhibition, for instance, just at a time when tourists will be most numerous. If, however, all parties could see their way clear to an agreement for united action, the money saved would go a long way towards making up the necessary funds that will be required in addition to the Dominion grant of \$50,000. It is a subject for careful consideration, and should receive such consideration apart from sectional feeling. If we cannot give up wholly for the Dominion Exhibition, we should give up just as much as we can. We shall, in that event, be well repaid by the better feeling which will result as a consequence between the two sections of the Province.

Since the above was written we learn that at a meeting of the directors of the Royal Agricultural and Industrial Society, held at New Westminster, the sentiment which prevailed was to request the Provincial Government to grant and to allow the money to be diverted to the Dominion fair. We understand that the idea was not to request the Government to give material assistance in getting exhibits together, but to waive the Government's right to reserve the right to the Dominion fair. Whether local associations could hold the fairs at all without the money received from the Provincial Government, and in such circumstances, might be much better to allow some of them at least to go over for one year altogether.

THE E. & N. RAILWAY.

The people of Victoria are intensely interested in the negotiations now going on for the acquisition of the E. & N. Railway by the B. C. Electric Railway Company. The B. C. E. R. has nothing new to state in addition to what appeared in yesterday's issue of the Colonist. The situation involved in the arrangement of details, and the confirmation of these by the C. P. R. authorities in Montreal. For some time it has been obvious that a company largely interested in Victoria as the C. P. R. would seek to own and control the E. & N. Railway, and the freight to Island points are brought. Obviously, too, it will be of general advantage to have direct railway connections of a company that can be controlled as part of a general system, making the success of Victoria and the Island of Vancouver part of a general system. Assuming that the negotiations now under way will be successful, the city steadily and steadily, the E. & N. Railway is a business corporation and undertakes nothing for the benefit of the public. The management realizes that the Island possesses great potentialities in minerals, timber, fisheries and agriculture, and that some time in the future these resources will materially contribute to the profits of the company. An investment of \$2,000,000 in the E. & N. Railway, if not to be undertaken lightly, and therefore, the success of the E. & N. Railway, as part of the system, becomes identified with the success of Victoria and the Island of Vancouver. The E. & N. Railway, in every effort to direct travel thitherward and to assist in every way possible in the development of the Island, the Island becomes a matter of certainty. The Grand Trunk Pacific or the Canadian Northern is something in the future, the possibility of which is more or less uncertain. The C. P. R. is a present fact and a success. The E. & N. 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