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Semi-Weekly Telegraph
ST. JOHN, N. B., JANUARY 31, 1906

HANDS UP!
One of the younger members of this
confederation, British Columbia is one of
the most strenuous. The threat of seces-
sion if the central government does not
give the Pacific province more money,
while not calculated to alarm the Domini-
on, will lead to a careful consideration of
the western grievances, and will perhaps
hurry a readjustment of relations
between the provinces, which might
otherwise come slowly if at all.
British Columbia is as yet a small member
of the Canadian family in point of popu-
lation, though to say so in British Colum-
bia just now would be provocative of a
breach of the peace.

The census of 1901 credited the province
with 178,057 souls, including Indians, Mon-
gols, labor agitators and excited politi-
cians, which was a tremendous increase
all along the line over the figures for 1891
— 98,000. Today the province has about
a quarter of a million, and it is growing
at a rate hitherto unequalled in Canadian
history. The British Columbians are rich
— and fertile in resources, prosperous,
progressive, confident, and strenuous. They
do not whisper when they desire to com-
municate with their eastern relatives, and
when they cry "Hands up!" to the Domini-
on, they expect the rest to keep men awake
at night.

And there is some warrant for their
point of view. Argued into the union, in
1871, we find them angry and threatening
a few years later because of the delay in
building the promised trans-continental
railroad. They threatened to secede then,
and their threat had much to do with ac-
celerating the completion of the road
which was to do so much for the whole
British Columbia, but for the Empire.
The reasons why Canada will not permit
the Pacific province to secede at the be-
ginning of this century, are very
numerous and wholly convincing. But
while the other provinces will be a unit
against secession, several of them which
have demanded "better terms" from the
Dominion will watch the growth and out-
come of the British Columbian agitation
with keen attention.

Secession talk, the dispatches tell us,
comes from no one political party in par-
ticular in British Columbia, but from all.
Mr. Alexander Henry Boswell Macgowan,
the Conservative member for Vancouver,
who uses a megaphone in urging his fel-
low citizens to cut the painter unless they
get what they want, is a Prince Ed-
ward Islander by birth. He was born in
Quebec county in 1850. He is a shipping
and insurance agent, and for eight years
was a member of the Vancouver school
board; part of that time he was its
president. He was elected to the legisla-
ture in 1903. He is of Scotch-English-
Irish descent, and he talks like a prema-
ture explosion. British Columbia has
long been demanding better terms. Its
case was presented at Ottawa in 1903 by
delegations representing the Prior gov-
ernment, and also later, the McBride gov-
ernment. Premier Dummer had made a
similar appeal in 1901. Col. Prior claimed
that since British Columbia entered into
the union in 1871, circumstances had
arisen which established a sound moral and
constitutional claim for an increased finan-
cial allowance by the federal government.
He presented several general reasons why
the Act of Union should be modified, or
why British Columbia thought it should,
and mentioned these special circum-
stances as upholding his claim:

1. The heavy cost of administration
caused by the physical character of the
country.
2. The distance from the commercial,
industrial, and administrative centres of
Eastern Canada.
3. The non-industrial character of the
province, whereby a larger percentage of
goods is imported and consumed than in
Eastern Canada, thus increasing the provin-
cial contribution to the federal treas-
ury in the way of taxes, in the ratio of
three to one.
4. The disadvantage of the province in
relation to the markets for its special
products.

British Columbia, he said further, had
spent \$18,000,000 in building 11,000 miles
of roads and trails, and that some sixty-
five miles were then under construction.
He gave this interesting comparison of
the total cost of provincial administra-
tion in the several provinces: British
Columbia, \$11.02 per head; Manitoba,
\$4.00; Ontario, \$1.85; Quebec, \$2.70; New
Brunswick, \$2.40; Nova Scotia, \$2.04;
P. E. Island, \$3.00. He submitted, also,
that as between Ontario and British Colum-
bia the cost for all governmental pur-
poses, including provincial, municipal,
and excise taxation, was re-
spectively, \$15.13 and \$30.35 per head.
There were, he said, heavy demands upon

British Columbia for pioneer settlement,
development and transportation which
the other provinces had outgrown, yet in
the period 1893-1903 the British Columbia
contribution through taxation to federal
revenues had been \$28,000,000, while the
federal expenditure in the province had
been only \$11,500,000.

About that time, too, the Victoria Col-
onist declared that at Confederation "we
accepted terms which we doubted were
unfair; now we ask for justice; but a
time will come when we can exact such
conditions as we please." Mr. Macgowan
and some others evidently believe the day
predicted by the Colonist has come. They
cry to the Dominion: "Hands up, or we
will secede!" To which, in good time,
the Dominion will reply: "Come, let us
reason together. The family is large, and
the demands are many. But there is a
way, and we shall together discover it."
And in time the Columbians will smile
when they remember how seriously they
listened to their leaders who raged like
the heathen, and imagined a vain thing.
Meaning there will be considerable
noise, and out of it may come "better
times" for New Brunswick, albeit a gen-
eral distribution would by substan-
tially but a shifting of money from one
pocket to another so far as it would af-
fect the people, for what comes out of
the federal treasury must first go in.

A GREAT CHANGE
Only nine of the 670 British seats now
remain to be heard from. Assuming that
the new House will be made up as fol-
lows:

Liberals.....	376
Unionists.....	160
Nationalists.....	84
Radicals.....	50
Total.....	670

Contrast the foregoing summary with
the standing of the parties
when the House last met, in August last:

Unionists.....	370
Radicals.....	218
Nationalists.....	82
Total.....	670

In these figures Conservatives and Lib-
eral Unionists were counted together, and
the live or six Labor members were clas-
sified with the Liberals, or Radicals. Mr.
Balfour had a majority of seventy over
the Radicals and Nationalists together.
Now the government will have 300 over
the Unionists alone, and 182 over Union-
ists and Nationalists. Over all other par-
ties the Liberal majority will be eighty-
two. The verdict against the late gov-
ernment is without British precedent. The
government is safe for six years, and for
a much longer term unless it develops un-
foreseen elements of weakness.

What does the opposition think of it?
If we could answer that question by
citing what some opposition journals
have been saying we would be compelled
to "view with alarm," etc. How very
serious, for example, is the London Daily
Telegraph, which uttered this solemn
warning a few days ago, just as the
present of the landslide began to appear:

"Those of us who look at the situation
as Englishmen first and as party men only
secondly, cannot anticipate the future
without disquietude. We have always re-
cognized that our system of party govern-
ment—illegal and unworkable as it is—
cannot be maintained if either of the two
great parties is permanently excluded
from office. On abstract grounds we have
less to fear from the Liberal Unionist
element than from the Radical element,
but we have less to fear from the Radical
element than from the Liberal Unionist
element. The Liberal Unionist element
is a strange and dangerous combination,
and we have to hold it in check. It is
the only element which is not a party
element. It is the only element which
is not a party element. It is the only
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But the returns show how little the
electors fear the peril which the respect-
able London Telegraph conjures up.
There is no reason to believe that Brit-
ish foreign policy will be altered or
that the country's prestige will suffer from
lack of continuity in that policy. The most
significant feature of the elections is the
rapid and almost startling growth of the
Labor party. The Montreal Witness says
in the success of Labor today, and the
promise of a still more striking success
later on, the end of the Liberal party, as
that party exists today. It says:

"What has been seen in Glasgow was
probably the beginning of the British par-
liamentary struggle in the near future.
In opposition, the Laborites have been
practically an extreme wing of the Lib-
eral party. Where it is a matter of gen-
eral principle, they are in the front, and
the two will be found on the same side,
but where, as in the Govan division, the
putting the ground with Toryism, the
Liberal and Labor vote is strong enough
to eliminate fear of a Conservative vic-
tory. Labor will not be found docile in
the Liberal ranks. In that division the
Liberals carried 5,096 votes and Labor
4,212, against Unionist 4,229. What has
been seen in Glasgow will in time ap-
pear in parliament. Even now the joint
Liberal and Labor vote is admitted to be
380 against 143, a far greater disparity
than existed in Govan. We must there-
fore look to see a growing self-assertive-
ness on the part of Labor, a self-assertive-
ness which should the Liberal party con-
tinue to grow in strength, can only, in
the natural order of things, result in dis-
integration of the Liberal party. Those
Liberals who can see their way to casting
in their lot with Labor will turn that
way, and those who cannot will, in time,
follow with the Conservatives. The
process we are describing will necessarily
take long years to work out, but its op-
eration is almost inevitable. The first ef-
fect of considerable labor demands will
be to throw the country majority back

upon the Conservative side. That will
throw Labor back into the arms of the
Liberals. That again will throw more Lib-
erals to the Conservative side. The con-
servatism of that day will be as far in
advance of the conservatism of today as
that of today is in advance of that of the
ante-Reform bill days. But the same old
division between Conservatives and Lib-
erals will again declare itself as the es-
sential line of party division, with such
quasies as home rule, unionism and im-
perialism as mere side issues.

The Labor party is a highly Socialist in
avowed purpose and aims if not in de-
clared principles. Mr. J. Keir Hardie says of it
in his article in the "Nineteenth Cen-
tury": "The foundation upon which the
party rests is the trade union movement,
and its inspiration is the socialism of the
Independent Labor party. These, with the
Fabian Society (also Socialist) and a few
sections of co-operators, make up the af-
filiated societies of the Labor Representa-
tives Committee." He expected the Labor party
would hold the balance of power this year,
but while he was writing his statement
he was not aware of the fact that some
of the candidates at the general election
And he added: "What we are witnessing
in this election is the beginning of
a revolution which will remodel
political parties and disturb the founda-
tions of political faiths."

THE SLOCUM DISASTER
After a delay of nearly two years, Capt.
Van Schaick, who commanded the escu-
sion steamer General Slocum by the bur-
ning of which 100 lives were sacrificed, has
been found guilty of criminal negligence
and sentenced to imprisonment for ten
years. The specific negligence of which the
jury found him guilty was his failure to
have fire drill carried out on the steamer
as the law directed. He was charged also
with having permitted the use of life-
preservers which were really worn and
useless, since they helped to sink the pas-
sengers rather than to support them in the
water. Of the other persons indicted in
connection with the most appalling of
steamship disasters all have escaped, either
wholly or with trifling punishment, such
as the loss of positions.

Van Schaick undoubtedly deserves the
punishment he will receive, great as it is
for a man of his age. But it is not
doubtful if his conviction in itself will
dramatically satisfy the demands of justice
or cause steamship owners and employees to
exercise in future the care necessary
for the construction, equipment, and handling
of vessels carrying passengers. The crim-
inal or preference has ever yet made men
do as they would not otherwise do. I do
not know if the Empire is any the better
for the man's conviction, but he was the
agent and the outcome of a system whose
greed and graft burned the Slocum's pas-
sengers and have subjected millions
of others to risks all the more terrible
because they are not suspected.

A LIVELY SPEECH
This morning's cablegrams show that
the London Times is disposed to rap Hon.
Sydney Fisher over the knuckles because
of his speech last week before the Mac-
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which he dealt freely and fluently
with many grave issues, both Canadian
and imperial. Mr. Fisher's speech will be
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