

# THE BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMERCIAL JOURNAL

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## WHAT'S THE MATTER?

News from Ottawa says that Mr. Gordon is the only member of the House of Commons from British Columbia who does not condemn the course of Mr. Wilmut in connection with the Fishery Commission—'cause why, as the despatch puts it, "he thinks the canners want too much." We have failed to see that in any way Mr. Wilmut was so influenced in his course, which has only added insult to the injury inflicted by the ignorant, ill-digested report which he had the audacity to publish as the result of a "full inquiry" into matters concerning the British Columbia fisheries—those of salmon in particular.

We can readily imagine Mr. Wilmut's anxiety to get anywhere, anywhere out of Victoria, and that he will make as speedy tracks as possible for home there is no reason to doubt. His all actuating—supreme—desire has been to extract all he could out of the witnesses, if not to justify, to at least excuse, his report, and but for Hon. D. W. Higgins he might have succeeded, as in Mr. Sheriff Armstrong he seems to have had an exceedingly pliable associate.

But if Mr. Wilmut had trouble out of his original report that trouble has only just begun, for the chairman of the commission has aroused a feeling—not alone among those who are directly interested—that will make itself felt if his prejudices and preconceptions shall cause a report to be framed in any way at variance with the known facts. Moreover, we shall be much deceived in Mr. Higgins if he fails to make—in default of a full and truthful presentment—such a statement of the case as every one knows will give a correct version of the case in all its manifold and in some respects antagonistic details. We have said "antagonistic," possibly the word "clashing" may be better, in view of the divergences that occur between the cases of the canners, the fishermen, and some classes of the community on the banks of the Fraser. But what about Mr. Gordon? Why should he be inclined to back up Mr. Wilmut rather than sympathize with and vindicate the aggrieved interests?

## A PARLIAMENTARY INCIDENT.

A few evenings since, a singular scene was presented upon the stage—not of the Mock Parliament, but—of the Provincial Legislature. It was no less than a regular tiff between the Premier and Mr. Speaker, who was charged by the leader of the House with having shown less consider-

ation and respect for his rights as First Minister than he was entitled to. The President of the Chamber warmly retorted, and, figuratively speaking, fur flew, the whole incident being finally, by consent of both the individuals concerned, allowed to subside into what it might please those primarily concerned to describe as a tempest in a teapot.

There are those, however, who are inclined to regard the incident as having much greater significance. Common report says that Mr. Higgins had expected to become a member of the Cabinet, and was not really conciliated when in lieu thereof he was placed in his present position—for people do say that he is ambitious and regards himself as fully the equal of any man in the Provincial Parliament. Then again, it is said the present Attorney-General is not happy in his associations, and it is remarked that, in the observations which he was bound to make in support of the Premier in the controversy previously referred to, he did not display his usual debating qualities. The Speaker unquestionably kicked; the Attorney-General scarcely endeavored to restrain him or call him off, it may have been because he took out of the occurrence a little quiet satisfaction on account of the unmerciful manner in which he was belabored last session by his chief. Since that time a paper has been started, which common reports credit with being the personal organ of the member for Cowichan. That publication thus far, however, is not in any way recognized as being a Ministerial mouthpiece. Moreover, with the admitted accession to its ranks of a number of the Independents of last session, the Opposition presents a much stronger fighting front, and its voting power on ordinary questions of confidence is more than doubled. These facts are not lost sight of by the knowing ones, and without commenting on them they aver that they are content to await the outcome.

## C. P. R. EXTENSION.

Whatever may be said as to the policy of the Canadian Pacific Railway in its treatment of Victoria, the objective point of the original project, and for which the entire Dominion made such great sacrifices, it cannot be denied that its management are exhibiting a very considerable amount of enterprise. This very week it has completed its connections with the city of Seattle, to and from which it runs its own cars daily over the line of the Great Northern, provisions already being under way when the latter's own through route is completed, for the Canadian road to continue to connect St. Paul and other central United States points with Pacific coast outlets on both sides of the national boundary. However this new connection may influence the company's American trade, it affords but slight additional accommodation to Victoria and the points of which she is the great centre, for which the wisdom of Mr. Van Horne and his co-directors does not yet appear to be making any further provision.

But, if there be any room for hope, or at any rate for consolation, it may possibly be found in the fact that the Victoria, Saanich and New Westminster Railway people

seem to be waking up, and on Saturday, through Hon. Amor De Cosmos, made an important representation to the Victoria City Council, from which it is expected to obtain a liberal subsidy. In short, it was then stated that when the road is in working order, people can get from Victoria to New Westminster, over a route 68 miles in length, in 2 hours and 33 minutes—45 miles on land and 23 on water. Moreover, it is intended to build a branch line of rail from Victoria to Esquimalt, to connect at the latter place with wharves, docks and machine shops, where doubtless ocean vessels will gladly take advantage of the fact of Esquimalt possessing a fine wharf to go into the harbor and pull up alongside, there to discharge and take on their cargoes. But, in view of the experiences of the past, it is still open to question whether or not the project of Mr. De Cosmos is much more than *in nubibus*. It is necessary occasionally with dead-and-alive schemes to make some sort of a splurge. Still we are disposed to hope for the best.

## POLITICAL S. E. TRACKING.

The sister province of Quebec has just passed through what may be almost termed a political revolution. It had become time to get rid of Mercierism, which, in a very short duration of office, had immensely augmented the public indebtedness and had almost necessitated the calling together of the creditors of the province—a climax which has appeared to be for so long impending. The great issue before the people was whether or not it had become necessary to get rid of Mercier, who everybody knew was ruining the country. Nevertheless even at this crucial period the temperance agitators appear to have had little else to do than sing the songs of temperance, and through their Alliance put to candidates a series of temperance questions, with the following official instructions to temperance voters:—"That in those constituencies where neither candidate is known to be a temperance man, and favorable to temperance legislation, the temperance electors are advised to deposit a blank ballot as a protest against the return of men not favorable to our cause."

Individuals or organizations who can seek to sway an electorate in this way can be characterized as nothing short of fanatics who are too good—or too bad—to live in this world, their proper destiny being translation to some other sphere where they can make a heaven or a hell of their own as may best please them. There are other vital principles aside from those of total abstinence upon which the happiness and prosperity of a community depend. It would seem as if these men would sooner place in position a thief who has the one merit of being a teetotaler rather than one who, though possessed of all human virtues and attributes, will not consent to be dictated to by a hole-and-corner convention of total prohibition Pharisees. Even the Almighty did not go as far as do these self-styled "holiers than thou." In His infinite wisdom He gave to our first parents the right of choice between good and evil, while these men, forsooth, strive to convert their fellow-beings into mere animated machines.