

THE QUESTION OF BETTER TERMS

The subject of the relations of British Columbia, or of any other province, with the federal or central authority, involving as it does possibly the future stability of the Dominion, is a very delicate one, and ought to be treated in a statesmanlike and common sense manner. It is not a matter that ought to be permitted to remain in the hands of unscrupulous and reckless demagogues whose only ambition is to gain a little cheap popularity in the minds of the unthinking and to maintain themselves by that means in political power. The Vancouver News-Advertiser argues that in introducing into the Dominion Parliament the resolutions that are to be submitted to the Imperial Parliament asking for certain amendments to the British North America Act Sir Wilfrid Laurier should have eliminated all reference to the million dollar special grant to this province, presumably in order that that matter might be left subject to further and direct negotiations between the representatives of British Columbia and the federal government. But is it not a reasonable proposition that the whole question of better terms having been left to the provinces as the parties chiefly interested, it is the duty of the central government to submit the whole matter to the Imperial parliament exactly as it came from the hands of the provincial premiers? If the Canadian confederation is to endure there must be some form of finality with respect to the relations between the central power and the subordinate powers of the Dominion. Such a consummation cannot be brought about, is it not manifest that we may at any time be confronted with some demand from some of the provinces that may culminate in complete disruption—that some issue may be created that will smash the federal compact "into its original fragments?" British Columbia is not the only member of the confederation that differs in its physical conformation and in certain other respects from some of the other partners to the compact. Prince Edward Island believes she has a good case for special treatment. And her contention is that in her case the terms of union have not been fulfilled to the letter.

In our case there is no claim that the terms of union have not been literally carried out. The issue is a moral one entirely. But then Prince Edward Island is a comparatively insignificant factor in our political system. Suppose the provinces of Quebec, which the Conservative press delights in holding up, falsely and mischievously as every one knows who has given any attention to the subject, as the recipient of special favors—Quebec one of the largest of the provinces of the Dominion—suppose that Quebec should decide that by reason of her great northern territory and the difficulty and excessive cost of administering that great region she is entitled to special financial terms and that none of the other provinces should have the right to say anything about the adjustment of such terms, what would the general effect be upon the future prospects of Canada? Quebec is powerful politically, and would be in a position to bring great pressure to bear upon any federal government that might happen to be in power. The same is true of Ontario. Is it not obvious that if the financial relations of the provinces with the Dominion are to be adjusted all the partners to the compact must be consulted and must have a voice in the readjustment? It appears to us that there can be neither finality to the relations of the provinces with one another nor assured permanence for the Dominion except under such an arrangement.

It is true that any government of any province may gain a cheap and transient popularity by assuming to be at war with the Dominion in defence of provincial rights. But in making a demand for better terms for British Columbia the fact ought to be borne in mind that there is no contention that the rights of the province under the constitutional instrument have been invaded. Our claim is a moral one, and its morality has been admitted. Members of the Dominion government advocated our cause before the conference of premiers. It is well known that all the federal ministers are anxious to go as far as possible in satisfaction of our claim. Such being the situation, we believe the members of the British Columbia legislature, when the matter comes up for consideration this week, should endeavor to treat it in a broad and reasonable and common sense spirit. But of course if the Premier is determined to act as he has acted in the past and to keep the question in the political arena and to treat it as a partisan issue, no progress can be made.

AN OBJECT LESSON FOR STEAMSHIP MEN.

One experience of Mr. J. J. Hill in the steamship business as carried on under the United States system of protection was enough. The Great Northern magnate has definitely announced that he will not attempt to replace the lost Dakota with another steamship of the same class or of any class. He says he will let the Japanese appropriate and take care of the business if they want it. There is every likelihood that other companies, some of them operating from Canadian ports, will assist the aggressive Orientals in this progress-

ing business. It is a remarkable thing, when we take into consideration the apparent fact that the Oriental trade is still in its infancy, notwithstanding the remarkable development of the past few years, that the Great Northern Railway Company, operating from Seattle, and then the Oceanic Steamship Company, doing business from San Francisco, should throw up their hands and declare that they have had enough—that Canadians and Japanese have practically put them out of business. It is not a good advertisement for the much-lauded policy of high protection.

Mr. Hill's announcement and the New York Post's comments thereon are full of interest and contain a lesson for the fiscal extremists of this country:

"When criticism and ignorant interference meet every effort toward further development," Mr. Hill said, "there is no incentive to go after new business. The present disposition to interfere with the railroads is likely to result in their paying attention only to the business already in hand, without building new branch lines or developing new business. So far as any loss of traffic by the Great Northern, due to the abandonment of the Dakota is concerned, it will be of little importance inasmuch as the Great Northern is already deriving from its own lines all the traffic which it can conveniently handle. The Japanese have good steamship lines, and they can care for the business. Nor are they troubled by rate regulations. They are supposed to maintain rates, of course, but as a matter of fact they do not, and they make rates that get the business."

The Post goes more fully into details in regard to Mr. Hill's decision and the cause thereof, remarking: James J. Hill's announcement that he will not replace the lost Dakota by a new vessel betrays a not altogether unnatural feeling of disgust at the difficulties he has encountered in trying to run an American line to the East. Primarily, the cost of it has appalled him. He has had, for instance, to pay \$10,000 for repairs in an American shipyard which cost him \$6,000 in Nagasaki—the difference being due primarily to our tariff barriers. The other troubles confronting all American ship-owners have also vexed Mr. Hill. With his impatience over the criticisms of railroads and the regulation of their rates we are less concerned. The country should, however, note with him that our Oriental trade is decreasing—partly, perhaps, because of our having successfully antagonized first the Chinese and then the Japanese. Even then we expect our ship-owners, whom we have bound hand and foot with protection thence, to make a showing, and better, when they fail. Unfortunately, Mr. Hill has turned to subsidies for aid, instead of laying more stress upon the antiquated navigation laws which hold us back. None the less, this object lesson ought not to be lost on congress and the country.

THE QUESTION OF BETTER TERMS.

The Premier of Canada has given notice in the Dominion Parliament that he will move an address to His Majesty asking for amendments to the British North America Act in accordance with the resolutions passed at the late conference of Provincial Premiers. Under the amendments proposed British Columbia will be entitled to an increase of \$115,000 a year in the subsidies derived from federal sources, together with an allowance of \$100,000 a year for ten years in recognition of our claim for special treatment.

Premier McBride, the representative of this province at the inter-provincial conference, having declined to agree to the proposition of Premier Whitney, the Conservative Premier of Ontario, who moved that British Columbia be granted an extra allowance of one hundred thousand a year in recognition of her special claim to "better terms," having refused to discuss amendments to Mr. Whitney's resolution proposed by the Finance Minister of Canada, and having withdrawn from the conference entirely, the business of the assembly was concluded with British Columbia unrepresented, and in a manner that may be accepted as the natural consequence of such lack of representation.

The foregoing are facts which will not be disputed. Nor will the proposition be gainsaid that, in the light of what has transpired, the position of Premier McBride is a very delicate one. He says on behalf of the government of which he is the head that he will decline to accept an annual allowance of one hundred thousand dollars in satisfaction of the claims for better terms, that resolutions embodying his views and the views of the government will be submitted to the legislature, forwarded to Ottawa, and the case carried before the Imperial authorities if necessary. There is no doubt whatever that a majority of the Legislature, possibly all the members of the Legislature, will endorse his position with regard to the inadequacy of the sum offered in satisfaction of our claims, while there may be a disposition to question the manner in which our case was laid before the conference and advocated by our representative. The point of chief importance from the point of view of Canada generally is the possibly effect of the attitude of British Columbia upon the question of better terms—whether in the event of this province signifying

her disapproval of the measure proposed, the Imperial Parliament will agree to give effect to any resolutions that may be submitted by the federal government. It is just a question whether, all the provinces of the Dominion being parties to the federal compact, the Imperial government will not insist upon unanimity before agreeing to any amendment to the N. N. A. Act. It may be in the power of the government of this province to effectually block the progress of any amendment until the demands are satisfied. That is the aspect of the matter that must be carefully considered by the legislature of British Columbia—whether, in short, it would be politic for this province to run the risk of incurring the resentment of all the other provinces of the Dominion, which evidently believe they have proposed a very generous measure for our relief in the light of the facts as inadequately presented by our representative, by blocking the way to a general readjustment. The McBride government has gained all the political capital it hoped for by its treatment of the matter of better terms. It is firmly seated in power for four years. It can surely afford to treat the subject in a statesmanlike manner now and endeavor to secure recognition of our claims to better terms through some other channel, possibly through direct negotiation with the Dominion government, in preference to rendering the work of the inter-provincial conference abortive.

Now is the time for all fore-handed people to get ready for eventualities. The fact has been announced on unquestioned authority that a great comet is travelling at the rate of millions of miles an hour in the direction of the earth's orbit. If the nucleus of this celestial but dreadful visitor strikes our planet we may experience but trifling inconvenience, but if we get a lash from its tail, "finis" must be written of us and all our works, inasmuch as we shall be consigned in the twinkling of an eye. As we do not wish to be set down as alarmists, there is some comfort in the reflection that an end of a similar kind has often been prophesied of us. Perhaps the comet may either sheer off or swing its tail in another direction.

Montreal Star: The Parisian press dwells upon the generosity and the fidelity to their pledges displayed by the British government in permitting a Boer general to become Prime Minister of the Transvaal so soon after the close of the war. It is by such methods that Britain has always made her rule secure throughout the world. Her rule never persecutes the vanquished. Her policy is to cause the hostility engendered by war to be forgotten as soon as possible. She will now labor to make loyal subjects of the Boers; and to turn what was a thorn in her side into a weapon for its protection.

The legislature has been in session three whole days, and that dear friend at Victoria and strong right hand of the McBride government, Mr. Bowser, senior member for Vancouver, has not yet opened his mouth except in the way of an interjection. Prodigious!

The explosion at Toulon furnishes another illustration of the truth that the modern warship is a very delicate and dangerous machine. It is costly business, both in life and treasure, this ceaseless preparedness against the possible aggressions of national neighbors.

Dr. Oronhyatekha handled millions of dollars and died worth less than seven-fifty thousand dollars. His case is certainly unique in these modern times. It is worthy of "special mention," and perhaps a trifle more.

Dr. Jameson and General Botha will be two of the premiers of South African colonies in attendance at the colonial conference. Time does work wonders in the political as well as in the physical world.

The city council of 1907 is but a stumbling volcano after all. The next meeting will probably find it in active eruption, emitting fire as well as smoke. The recollections of the late municipal election deter us from offering further remarks at present.

If Comrade Hawthornthwaite had only spoken sooner about the abolition of an entirely indefensible provincial post, and were still the Master of the Administration. The revenue tax collector is on his annual rounds.

If the Colonist only had the selection of our Ottawa representatives it could name men who could not reasonably be charged with lack of garrulity.

And we had thought this tourist association business had been disposed of for a year!

CHECKER PLAYERS.

Experts Gather at Boston to Take Part in Tournament for National Championship.

Boston, Mass., March 18.—Some of the best-known checker players of the country gathered here to-day for the opening of a week's tournament for the national championship. Among the important business matters to be considered is the project for organizing a national checker association. In addition to the championship honor, prizes amounting to \$500 will be given. Among the players entered are Charles F. Baker, of Boston, who for twenty-eight years has held the national championship; L. S. Head, of Lowell; W. Reynolds, of New York state; H. W. Reynolds, Syracuse, and J. J. Lanin, Bronxville.

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THE GREAT EMPORIUM OF THE GREAT WEST

DAVID SPENCER, LTD.

Special Easter Values Await Your Selection

Now Proceeding--Important Sale of Linoleums and Muslin Embroidered Curtains and Combination Wallpapers

SECOND AND THIRD FLOORS

Elaborate Yet Inexpensive Attire for Easter

Our special showing of new Spring attire for Easter is rapidly approaching completion. We have now a wealth of beautiful garments to choose from and without question the season's fashions are the most fascinating and commanding ever seen. The textile manufacturers and tailors have conspired and produced some of the choicest creations imaginable. Everyday onward is a special show day in the Mantle Department, informal of course, but none the less interesting. You are cordially invited to these preliminary exhibitions in correct dress.

Ladies' New Spring Costumes

NAVY BLUE PANAMA COSTUME, Eton coat, with wide girdle attached, 3-4 length sleeves with cuff, pleated front and back, collar and cuffs trimmed with black silk braid and buttons, vest of colored applique, lined with taffeta, very full pleated skirt, special, each \$37.50

LADIES' COSTUME, in black and white check, Eton coat with deep girdle, trimming of stitched straps, short sleeves, collar and cuffs of black silk with braid trimmings, pleated skirt, special, each \$32.50

LADIES' ETON COSTUME, in grey and white, small check effect, pleated girdle attached, coat trimmed with stitched straps piped with grey silk, elbow sleeves with deep cuff, collar of grey silk with braid trimming, pleated skirt, special, each \$27.50

LADIES' COSTUME, in very dark brown with light stripe, semi-fitting hip coat, double breasted, with pockets, full length sleeve, with cuff, pleated skirt, special, each \$15.00

Ladies' New Spring Coats

LADIES' COAT, box back, hip length, black and white check, trimmed with stitched straps of same material, single breasted with roll collar, special, each \$13.50

LADIES' 3-4 LENGTH COAT, light grey stripe effect, full sleeves, with deep cuff roll collar, single-breasted, pockets, special, each \$12.50

LADIES' 3-4 LENGTH TWEED COAT, box back, with stitched box pleat down centre, also stitched strap forming yoke effect, double breasted collar and cuffs, with silk braid trimming, special, each \$18.50

LADIES' 7-8 LENGTH COAT, tight fitting back, double breasted, outside pockets, full sleeves with deep cuff, trimming of stitched straps and buttons, special, each \$20.00

LADIES' 7-8 LENGTH COAT, very light grey stripes, box back, velvet collar, outside pockets, four stitched straps running over shoulder, forming yoke effect, special, each \$15.00

Our unusually large purchase of the New Creations enables us to give you elaborate yet inexpensive attire for Easter

Men's Smart New Suits for Easter

Our Clothing reputation is well known, the stocks we carry being the most comprehensive in varieties to be found in the city. Correct styles from well dressed quarters, first class workmanship and high grade materials characterize the special showing of new Spring Suits.

NEW FIT-RITES, fancy worsteds in grey, brown, blue, black, grey checks and brown checks, ranging in price per suit from \$30.00 down to \$15.00

A SPLENDID ASSORTMENT OF BLUE AND BLACK SUITS IN WORSTEDS, CHEVIOTS AND SERGES, prices range from \$25.00 down to \$12.50

Our immense stock, specially purchased and low-priced for a "quick-turnover," will command your attention during the coming week.

The Following Important Clearance Sales Now Proceeding

Choice New Printed Linoleums (3rd Floor)

By an unusually heavy purchase direct from the factory—clearing out entirely some of the choicest new goods, we are enabled to give you the advantage of the heavy discounts we secured. We have therefore placed these exquisite new linoleums on special sale.

The remarkable values offered will astonish you.

CHOICE NEW PRINTED LINOLEUMS in newest designs and colorings, 10 patterns, regular value 50c per square yard; special sale price, per 35c

Accumulation of remnants to be sold at half price

Muslin Embroidered Curtains (2nd Floor)

The clearance of Muslin embroidered curtains consists of 16 pairs only. A glance at the prices will indicate the special reductions made.

Special Sale of Muslin EMBROIDERED CURTAINS, \$2.50 a pair

5 Pair Embroidered Muslin Curtains, scalloped edge, regular value, per pair \$8.75, special sale, per pair \$2.50

9 Pairs, No. 5692, Embroidered Muslin Frilled Curtain, regular value, per pair \$5.75; special sale, per pair \$2.50

1 Pair 5964, Muslin Embroidered Curtains, regular value, per pair, \$6.75; special sale, per pair \$2.50

1 Pair 5690, Muslin Embroidered Frilled Curtains, regular value, per pair \$6.75, for, per pair \$2.50

Latest Art Loom Tapestries

Couch Covers, in 3 soft colorings, red and green, brown and green, green and terra; full size, 3 yds. very special, each \$2.50

Extra Good Couch Covers, colors, green and red; special value, each \$1.50

A very superior quality Couch Cover, full 3 yds., brown and green and red colorings, special value, each \$3.50

A special Table Cover, special value, each \$1.75

Red, and red and green and green. These are Art Loom weaves, also a line of similar colorings in better qualities, each 2.75

New Combination Wallpapers (2nd Floor)

We have decided to clear the entire carload of new combination wallpapers side walls, ceilings and borders—that were received for the spring season. They include the best English, German and French importations. There is a splendid variety of novelties for dining room, parlor, library or den. The selection of colors and patterns is comprehensive enough to meet every requirement, including gilt tapestry and embossed papers; special prices, per roll, 20c, 15c, 10c, 6c, 5c, and..... 3c

When purchasing your Wallpaper, CONSULT US FREE FOR HOUSE PAINTING, DECORATING and PAPERHANGING. "Efficiency with Economy" has placed us on top. Confer with us and save money.

THE UNFOLDING OF SPECIAL VALUES IN EASTER GOODS TAKES PLACE ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

DAVID SPENCER, LIMITED.

VICTORIA'S REAL

Having demonstrated "rail connection" in the Colonist is to be applied as it has been in the political purposes, we are the matter rest for the are several things clear with the subject: That Victoria were bunched into voting for the McBride government in that government, if at some for the island, thing to promote rail the mainland; that it has not the slightest lifting its little finger of the people of V other section of the is ter of rail connection served its purpose for the "cry" is to be snuggled until another convenient production, possibly another Dominion is due, when we attempt will convince a too confident vote for the Conserv will mean a step in the attainment of the ambly We submit that the connection with the m important by far to be football of. It has been indiscriminately by C ticians for the past least, and the disheart case is that while have invariably gained their ambitions, the an torians are no nearer they were at the date with the Dominion. T that the newspaper w tician who again intru ject and endeavors to capital out of it for aggrandizement or for his party, should be enemy of this commun of political adventure made the aspirations Victoria a by-word in the province, and as th of criticism so effective effect on the project of has been most mischie

THE OPPOSITION

Mr. J. A. Macdonald the opposition, has made during the short time public life. Although is a strong opponent of government, is quick weakness in the armou ents, and thruste and skill and effectiveness, a sonal enemy on either House. Consequently er will be warmly w takes his place in the sincerely congratulated recovery from what il developed into serious il donald's following has duced as the result elections. But the ou due to any weakness or to any mistakes in the presentation of the position. The indict government was most verdict of the people counted for on the pr position to turn the lea least a change might hfect upon the prospe prevailing in the prov have been obvious to discerning that not a administration could est effect in producing when men are busy an are evidently not th rate too deeply into th and effect. We believe discover in the course years that they made take. The government aged by the result of continue its "policy" warding friends by a tion of the public men will insist upon receiv measure with the se formed. Consequently in greater need than opposition. Mr. Mac followers will be it sition to discharge th for the public. Th fice is possibly not the object for a zealous keep in view. Govern tain calibre with pers tain calibre behind accomplish their own

PEACE RIVER LAND AND OIL

Unless we are very the government of t sought the governmen ion to select its lan River district in or event of immigration tion, all confusion w tlement might be ob minion authorities ha the request and are the work of selection tually have suppose of the federal adm have been regarded all concerned. But s It is assumed, and v is for the assumption