

The Colonist.

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THE SEMI-WEEKLY COLONIST

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THE COMPANIES' ACT

The uproar over the Companies' Act is not warranted by the facts. We are far from saying that the act does not require amendment in some of its details, but we do say that its principle is correct. It is right that people in this province, doing business with foreign companies, should have a correct idea of their status; it is right that, as local business men have to contribute to the revenue of the province, foreign corporations, seeking to do business here, should also contribute. This is the case in every other province in Canada, and no good reason can be advanced why it should not be the case here. The existence of the act is being made an excuse for attacks upon the Attorney-General. He is accused of seeking to force his views upon the public regardless of whether they are right or wrong. Now the facts of the case are that the Companies' Act was prepared by counsel specially employed for that purpose, who were charged with the duty of examining similar acts in force in other countries and preparing a measure suitable for this province. When amendments were proposed, these were submitted to counsel for investigation, and such of them were adopted as seemed to be called for. Possibly others ought to have been adopted. We are not disinclined to think that this may be the case; but after a law has been prepared with care, and been reconsidered also with care, there seems to be some ground for the assumption that the Attorney-General has endeavored to reach a conclusion as nearly in the interests of the province as was possible. The door is not closed to further amendments, and in the meantime companies are taking advantage of the act, and are registering under it by hundreds. Under these circumstances we greatly question the wisdom of creating the impression abroad that companies are being treated with exceptional rigor in this province. Last year some of the Toronto papers were very emphatic in condemning certain provisions in the act, and charged the provincial government with displaying an un-Canadian spirit asking the house to pass it. It was shown to those papers that the section about which they complained the most was copied verbatim from the statute of Ontario on the same subject.

We feel warranted in saying that the government stands ready to examine into any representations that may be made by the business community in respect to the act and to pronounce upon them in a spirit of perfect fairness, without considering the fact that they may involve changes in the law as it now stands. Mr. Bower is a gentleman, who when he thinks he is right, is not to be lightly forced to change his views; but as he does not reach his conclusions hastily, and he is justified in standing by them until he has been shown that they are unwise. He is responsible in great measure for the legislation of the province, not those persons who so freely criticize him. The duties of Premier are so manifold and so arduous that he of necessity must entrust the framing of legal enactments to the Attorney-General, and those whom the latter may employ to assist him. Of course the Premier cannot escape responsibility for unwise legislation by seeking to place the burden upon the shoulders of the Attorney-General; and we are satisfied that he has no desire to do so. When we say that the responsibility for legal measures rests upon the Attorney-General, we are speaking in a professional sense not in a political one. The duty of preparing a Companies' Act rested upon the Attorney-General, and he may be presumed to have given it too great a degree of attention to be ready to alter it merely because he is asked to. We have the greatest respect for the views of such bodies as the boards of trade, and believe that due weight ought always to be given to them, but it does not follow that because the Attorney-General does not see eye to eye with representatives of the boards, he is wrong. Sometimes laymen are unable to see the full effect of changes they propose in legislation. In like manner it is doubtless true that lawyers may not quite see the effect upon business of certain enactments. The upshot of the whole matter seems to us to be that the amendment of the Companies' Act is something worthy of very careful consideration, but that in the meanwhile there is no sense in getting into a panic over it and calling any one hard names.

AN URGENT NEED.

The officials of the Victoria Post Office are endeavoring, so to speak, to put in a two-ringed circus in a single-ringed tent. Business has outgrown the building in which it is carried on. Room has only been got for the clerks by infringing upon the space provided for the public, and the end of the possible encroachment has been reached and yet the accommodation for the clerks is insufficient. It is difficult to see how any additional room can be got except by taking over a part of the already restricted space occupied by the Custom House. To our way of thinking the time has come when a new post office is urgently demanded. So urgent is the case that it will be impossible, no matter how active the Dominion Government may be in providing a new building, to get it ready before it will be needed. There is another reason for haste. The government has no site that can be used for a post-office, and as land is advancing in value steadily and, in the centre of the city, very rapidly, if a site for a new post office is secured within the next six months the cost will be very much less than it will be afterwards. Therefore not only in the public interest but for the sake of economy the Dominion authorities ought not to delay in taking steps in the matter referred to.

COURTS AND RECORDS.

Among the matters spoken of at the meeting of the Board of Trade yesterday was the necessity of providing more room and greater security for the office of the Registrar-General and also a new court-house. The cases seem to be very clear, and we assume that the only reason it has not received practical consideration before now is that its urgency has not been pressed upon the government. The demands upon the government are many, and very large appropriations had to be asked of the Legislature this year for matters especially relating to Victoria. Take the Songhees Reserve for one thing. We do not think the citizens quite appreciate what Mr. McBride asked his colleagues in the ministry and in the House to assent to, when he expressed a wish for an appropriation of three-quarters of a million dollars to settle this long-drawn out question. Then there have been large expenditures in connection with the Mill Bay Road, far larger than any one imagined. Provision has also been made for the beginning of new departmental buildings, for the general improvement of Parliament Square, for the assistance in protecting the Dallas Road foreshore and so on. Even with the large revenue available a line has to be drawn somewhere, and if the Victoria representatives hesitated in asking for an immediate appropriation for a new court-house and an enlarged and improved registry office, they can very well excuse themselves by saying that there had been no public demand for these things. We think, however, that the time has come when action ought not to be any longer delayed, and that at the next session of the Legislature provision ought to be made for these very necessary public works. Here again comes up the question of site. The suggestion has been made that the new court-house should be on Parliament Square, but we do not quite agree with this.

AN OBSERVATORY FOR VICTORIA

Mr. Napier Denison's appeal for an observatory for Victoria is one with which there will be much sympathy among those persons who have investigated the question. When the word "observatory" is used, most people have in mind an establishment equipped for astronomical observations, but while Mr. Denison does not exclude this from the scope of his plans, it is not the chief feature of them. His purpose is to have provided at Victoria an equipment for the careful and complete observation of earth movements, using that expression in its broadest sense. He believes that a study of these movements, which are constant, if irregular, will cast valuable light upon important matters, and especially that they may lead to the determination of connection between coal mine accidents and seismic action. It is not to be assumed that it will become possible to tell in advance when gas will be found in mines, but it may be possible to indicate when it may likely be found, and just as mariners, on being advised of the prospects of a storm can take the needed precautions, so those in charge of mines can be on the lookout for the first symptoms of danger. If this can be accomplished it will be of incalculable value. It will mean the saving of life and property to an extent which cannot now be estimated. Let it be supposed that by pursuing the line of investigations followed by Mr. Denison it becomes possible to inform the

managers of mines that the presence of gas may be looked for because of unusual seismic movements. Inspection would in such a case be extremely rigid and men could be kept out of the workings until assured of safety or until the gas could be removed. This possible commercial value of the investigations would, along with the importance of them of great public importance. Victoria is especially well suited for the headquarters of such observations, because of its position in relation to the great zones of seismic activity. We hope Mr. Denison's praiseworthy efforts may be followed by action by the Dominion government.

THEATRICAL NUISANCES

First and foremost among theatrical nuisances is the person who will persist in coming late and insists upon being shown to his seat while the play is in progress. When the late-comer also persists in carrying on a conversation with another offender the offence is aggravated. Such observations as, "O yes, I think this is our seat," or "They are the best seats I could get," and so on, do not add to the enjoyment of those persons who are trying to listen to what is being said on the stage. Doubtless they are infinitely more important, but the public will need a good deal of education before it can be made to think so. If you cannot help being late, and if you have to be shown to your seat while the play is going on, you owe it to yourself and to every one else to keep your observations to yourself. And just in passing it may be well to observe that a lot of people in Victoria would be the better if they would cultivate such a thing as repose of manner. This town is conspicuously deficient in that admirable quality. When you get on a street car for example, it is not necessary to inform humanity in general where you are going because you happen to see a friend who you think might be interested in knowing. In regard to this particular theatrical nuisance, if it is not abated, the management will surely have to take drastic measures to protect those of its patrons who come to a play in time.

Another theatrical nuisance is the person who has seen the play before and keeps telling all and sundry what is coming next. For such there is absolutely no forgiveness. Next to those diners is the person who has seen the actor in other plays or other actors in the same play. It is well enough to talk about such things between the acts, provided you do not talk in a tone that can be heard over half the house, but to do so while the play is in progress is rudeness.

The third nuisance is the person who feels he must go out between the acts, even though in so doing he discommodates a number of ladies. It is pleasant to be able to say that this nuisance is not so much in evidence in Victoria as it used to be; but really there is no good reason why a man cannot sit through a play just as well as a lady can.

We venture the guess that it will be a long time before the officials of Victoria undertake to be a law unto themselves in preparing a voters' list, and that hereafter when they are advised legally that they are wrong, they will get themselves right as quickly as they can.

"The Steam Engine Indicator and its Diagram" is the title of a paper read before the Institute of Marine Engineers of London and the Association of Marine and Stationary Engineers at Victoria. Its author is Mr. W. G. Winterburn of this city. The paper is necessarily very technical, but it is said to be very thorough and able.

Referring to the letter printed this morning from the Mayor in regard to the costs in the proceedings to declare the late municipal election invalid, we are in a position to say that the reason influencing the government to make the costs payable by the city was that it proposed by legislation to take away the right of appeal from the losing party to the proceedings. To do this and at the same time to force him to pay costs would have been clearly unjust.

Manchuria's Crew Stays Aboard. NORFOLK, Va., March 9.—After a night of terror, twenty-eight members of the crew of the British ship Manchuria, stranded three miles below Little Island, on the Virginia coast, refused to leave the vessel today. With the shifting of the wind the sea was almost as calm as a millpond. Wreckers say they will save the vessel and expect to float her on the late tide tomorrow.

Probably Massacred.

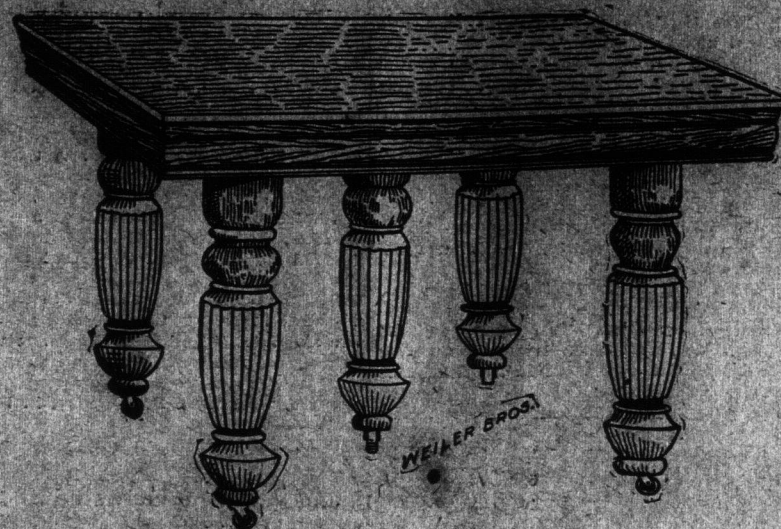
MELBOURNE, March 9.—The search for the administrator of Papua, who disappeared while on an exploration trip in the interior of the island, has established the probability that the party was massacred at a place called Purari when short of supplies.

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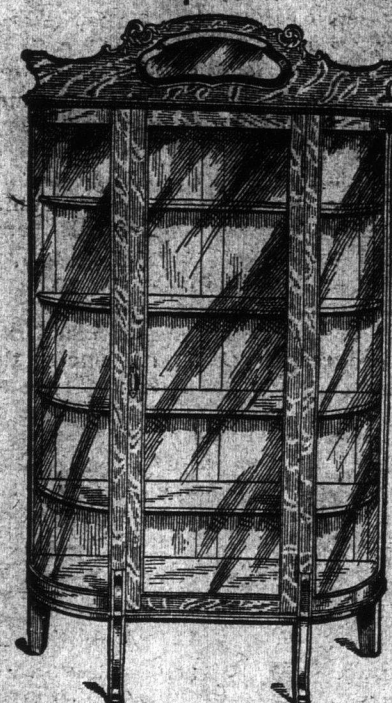
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Our assortment of quality Buffets from \$25.00 is of great interest to any one who is contemplating making a purchase for the dining-room. We have some new ones that are just being priced, and they are now ready for your inspection. They are magnificent Buffets, the woods are perfect, being specially selected—we choose the most beautiful grains. The finishes are of the best, the fixtures are all of high quality. Our showing at present on our third floor of these Buffets is a pleasure to any one who takes a pride in a pretty home. Why, you can spend hours looking at these Buffets, the different designs, studying the beautiful grain of wood, etc., is an education. Whenever you have the time make a visit to see this new furniture—you don't have to buy. Come and look around and enjoy yourself among these new goods. Every way you turn you see something new.

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Dinner Wagons From
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IRISH

For a long time it seems that the inhabitants of at least sun-worshipping of which so many are try, were thought to in this worship, and these ideas have been search, and it is now leeds were burial plac associated with the c to be used by the pri prayer, and were also tilities. There are no land. Indeed the mo religion is studied the have been monotheist appear to have been demigods, but the ped from the Druids a deity, who was surro Irish were always love folk-lore is richer than giants and all sorts of They were highly em simple in their ideas, was exceedingly favo tion of Christianity, an country was the new cordial welcome or early and complete a were presented to the mixed with Greek ph tics.

As was said in the Patrick was not the fi to the Irish, for it had ing on its shores who sion was so remarkab ant a part in the hist may be said to mark a surrounded this rema that seems incredible, miss all the marvelo sociated with his nam he found Ireland pa places on the southea than from one end to St. Patrick's birth is n but the authorities pla 377 and 387. His birt certainty, some sayin others in France. He Roman extraction. F father's name was Ca man name. "His own cius being his Roma that he was of noble d in France and was s in 434. The date of h years assigned rangi to 493. If the latte lived at least 116 ye tions that have com be of interest. It is he engaged in conte that took place betw tian priest. Patrick ful, and in one of the priests died. Recra fore him with words his garments, but fe glance. Laeghaire, t land, perished with he would not accept met the saint, and on cided to become Chris allowed to see Chris the Eucharist and the found it hard to acc convince him, Patrick and then offered him joys of Heaven. He once died. So many nature that Father Th ing unable to deny the by saying that the Iris ple," with "a strong character."

It is not necessary an attempt to explain of other remarkable mission. We have t that his success was in For a third of a cen versed the island, visi least once, and mak from end to end. The him, and be baptized. erected churches, and asteries and nunnerie hundreds begged to prayer, and hundreds be made "brides of were from all classe appeared in what is the seven sons of the sand of their clansme the people accepted of Cashel and all his n at the time of Patri whole Dalcassian trib time. The later histo this acceptance of th not materially affect ple as a whole. There heve that with the su by priests of the new fion of the people peris The history of Irel turies after the missi marked by a great d tribal wars, and her co tracts from the Danes. hardy adventurers from