

Twice-a-Week Times

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TRAMWAY COMPANY AND CITY.

Our correspondent, "A," as well as several other equally estimable contributors, wants to know why the city should grant any concessions to the B. C. Electric Railway Company in exchange for the concession of cheaper rates for light and power. As the Times initiated an agitation which resulted in a reduction of electric lighting rates on a previous occasion, possibly we may, without risk of being charged with inconsistency as an advocate of public ownership of public utilities, point out why the council has taken a doubtful position in endorsing the company's proposition and why, also, the ratepayers would be justified in ratifying it.

In the first place, then, the privileges the B. C. Electric Company enjoys upon the streets of Victoria may be dismissed from consideration altogether as beside the question. The company acquired its rights with the charter under which it is operating. At the time of the acquisition of the charter the privileges it carried were not considered of very great intrinsic value. Very few local capitalists would have cared to invest their money in such a venture. The value of such a franchise depends entirely upon the actual population and the future prospects for increase of population in a city. At the time of the failure of the original street railway company and the appearance in the field of the new, Victoria was certainly not enjoying the advantages not incurring the risk of the disadvantages of a boom of any kind. The securities acquired, therefore, were not gilt-edged. The company "took a chance," to employ an expression readily understood in these speculative times, and it won. We submit that, under the circumstances, it is hardly fair to reproach the management with abusing the privileges conveyed by its charter. All it has got was freely given by the legislature, and the action of the legislature was endorsed with avidity by the ratepayers.

We ask our correspondents, therefore, not to attempt to confuse the issue by introducing extraneous matters such as comparisons between the treatment the company accords Vancouver and the company meted out to Victoria. Our sister city claims a population twice as large as the population of Victoria, and every one knows that the value of a street railway franchise increases in mathematical proportion with the growth of population. Fortunately for the city of Vancouver, the charter of her street railway company was not given for so long a term as the charter of the first tramway line in Victoria. The company foresaw that the Vancouver charter was likely to prove very valuable, and it agreed, for a consideration, to the payment of a certain figure annually for the privileges it enjoyed upon the streets. And what is true of street car traffic applies to the vending of light, heat and power. The larger the population the more valuable the franchise and the lower the rates at which these conveniences can be supplied.

But in Vancouver there is a factor in the situation which is more favorable to the company and enables it to deal more generously with its customers than is the case in Victoria. In the sister city the company owns its own source of water supply. Its management has always contended, and produced proof in support of its contention, that it is handicapped here as compared with Vancouver in having to pay a heavy rental for the water it used in generating its electric power. It is upon condition of getting rid of this handicap that it purposed giving the people of Victoria, although fewer in numbers than the people of Vancouver, exactly the same terms as it gives the consumers of the terminal city.

As to the contention that in entering into an agreement with the street railway company we may be committing ourselves to something we may have reason to regret, is there anything substantial in it? Will an examination of the facts not establish our position that the advocates of public ownership of public utilities are merely fighting a phantom?

Suppose we purchase the works of the Esquimalt Water Works Company, will not that transaction in itself exhaust our municipal credit to the extent at least that we shall have no margin left upon which to enter the business of supplying power and light to citizens? If we determine to go to Sooke Lake for water, will not the conditions in that case be even more strongly against entering the scope of municipal enterprise? It appears to us that whatever course we may adopt in respect of an increased supply of water for municipal purposes we shall have upon our hands a programme fully up to the limits of our credit.

It may be quite true, and we believe it is beyond question, that ultimately

the railway company will develop the water rights it has acquired at Jordan River. But it is also true that the company is establishing a plant in Victoria which, in combination with its works at Goldstream, might be made to serve all its local purposes for a number of years if no further extensions of any importance were carried out. The point to be considered, therefore, is whether it would be expedient for the sake of an abstract question of principle, for the ratepayers to deal adversely with the proposals of the company. And, in dealing with the matter, we should also bear in mind the fact that there is nothing in the agreement to prevent the city from acquiring the electric lighting plant and business, should it decide to supply consumers with light and power, by process of arbitration. That is the course which would most certainly be adopted in any event, because it would be the height of economic folly to attempt to duplicate the plant of the company in a city like Victoria.

As we have already said, the proper thing for the ratepayers to do is to endorse the agreement entered into between the city council and the B. C. Electric Railway Company.

DEVELOPMENT OF OUR MINERAL RESOURCES.

The Department of Mines, Ottawa, has issued a bulletin giving the production of cement in Canada during the calendar year 1908. One of the most gratifying improvements made in the administration of the department by Mr. Templeman during the past year has been the prompt publication of reports respecting the mineral resources of the country and their free distribution. Information respecting the geology of the districts explored and of the mining industry generally, to be of practical value, should be promptly published, and we are aware that a determined effort is being made to give publicity promptly at the end of each year to the results of the work of the officers of the department.

Complete statistics of the production of Portland Cement in Canada during 1908 are given in the bulletin. The total quantity produced was 3,495,961 barrels of 50 pounds net as compared with 2,491,513 barrels in 1907, or an increase of 1,004,448 barrels, or 40.3 per cent.

The production of Portland Cement in 1908 was derived from 23 operating plants, with a total capacity of 27,500 barrels, equivalent to about 8,250,000 barrels per year of 300 days, or 10,000,000 if all plants were run continuously for the whole year. The operating plants were distributed as follows: One in Nova Scotia using blast furnace slag; one in Manitoba making a natural Portland Cement; one in British Columbia, two in Alberta and three in Quebec using limestone and clay; and fifteen in Ontario, of which twelve use marl and three limestone. The total daily capacity of the plants using marl was 10,400 barrels, as compared with 17,100 barrels per day for all other plants. Of the total quantity of cement made in 1908, 1,573,090 barrels were made from marl and 1,922,871 barrels from limestone and slag.

The average price at the works during 1908 as returned by the manufacturers was \$1.39 per barrel. Prices in car lots, ex-package at Toronto and Montreal, according to trade quotations, ranged from \$1.90 in January to as low as \$1.55 in December. In Winnipeg prices ruled during the latter half of the year at about \$2.40.

There is very little cement exported from Canada; only \$34,591 worth being recorded for 1908. The imports which were, previous to 1904, larger than the Canadian production, have been decreasing since 1906 and were in 1908 equivalent to but 17.6 per cent. of the sales of Canadian cement, or 14.9 per cent. of the total consumption. A duty of 2 1/2 cents per 100 pounds, equivalent to 43 1/2 cents per barrel of 350 pounds net, is levied on imports. The weight of the package is, however, included for purposes of duty.

"FLIES ON THE WHEEL."

The Premier of British Columbia and his friends and supporters are at present engaged in the pleasant pastime of holding political love feasts throughout the province. There is no reason why anyone should object to this method of passing the legislative recess. It is at once the pleasure and the duty of a leader whose ambition to get in has been gratified and whose chief conception of that which follows getting in is to "eat in." But when leader and lieutenant base their appeals for continued support upon what they and their friends in opposition have done for the province, we think the people they are appealing to are entitled to particulars. They point out the position of the province to-day compared with its position six years ago as proof of wonderful accomplishments. These they do in general terms, but if any inquisitive Conservative or sceptical Liberal were to ask for specific instances, we fancy the vain-glorious coterie of stumblers would be hard put to it to give them.

The record of the government of Premier McBride is before the public. Will some advocate of the case of that government indicate anything it has done to promote any one of the industries of the province? The growth of the agricultural and horticultural interests is one of their stock references,

which they ascribe to the zeal and progressiveness of the Finance Minister, who is also Minister of Agriculture. Now the prime requisite of agriculture and horticulture in a province so sparsely populated as British Columbia is a market for the products of the farm and the orchard. What has the local government done to create such a market? The demand for fruit and agricultural products depends entirely upon an increase of population within the province or in contiguous provinces. Has the McBride government sought to develop the mining industry of the province of British Columbia and thus attract a population that would be a heavy consumer of the products of the orchard and the farm? Is it not a fact that everything the government has done has tended to depress rather than to stimulate mineral production? Mining men strongly maintain the affirmative of this proposition and contend that but for the stimulus of the bounty on lead the industry would today be in a very unsatisfactory position.

There is the lumber industry of the province also. What has the government done to assist this, one of the most important of the British Columbia's sources of wealth? It is not what ever prosperity the lumberman enjoys entirely due to the progressive policy of the Dominion government, which has encouraged by the construction of railways immigration to the Northwest and thus providing an increasing and remunerative market? What has the McBride government done to encourage the construction of railways within the province—a policy which should surely be within that government's sphere of activities, if it has any—thus providing a growing market as a valuable auxiliary to the domestic market of the Northwest and to the foreign market?

A few days ago one of the organs of this government "pointed with pride" to the wonderful increase of railway mileage within the province. How many miles of railway were constructed within the province as a result of the policy of the McBride government? How many miles of railway would have been built or are now in process of being built as a consequence of the local government's policy?

Take any of the various lines of industry which might legitimately engage the attention of a government with a view to facilitating progress and point out what the McBride administration has accomplished—mining, fisheries, agriculture, horticulture or lumbering—what has the government endeavored to do for the promotion of these basic sources of provincial wealth?

Is it not true with respect to any of them that the government has, adopting the language of Premier McBride, simply "sat tight" and waited for "something to turn up," and that that which has turned up is due to the activity of the Dominion government? And for the progress the province has made the provincial ministry has the effrontery to take all the credit to itself.

A NOTABLE FEAST.

The "place de resistance" on the programme prepared for the entertainment of the delegates to the Imperial Press Conference was, we presume, the grand banquet given their colonial contemporaries by the newspaper men of Britain. For this feast, we are told, there were provided four hundred fowls, two hundred ducks, thirty turtles, three hundred pounds of salmon (of the only true variety), five hundred bottles of champagne and two thousand cigars. Forty chefs prepared the food, three hundred waiters served it, using ten thousand plates and dishes and twenty tons of china, glass, linen and silver. Making a generous allowance for the "sober second thoughts" of the day of repentance, isn't a contemplation of this most noble bill of fare sufficient to make the gastric juices flow in the midst of the fellows who had to stay at home and grind for the honor and glory of their preferred brethren? We suspect that under such auspicious circumstances the feast of reason and the flow of soul went off with a fine swing notwithstanding the unavoidable absence of George Ham, the brightest, the wittiest and the most genial press man of them all—still a newspaper man at heart although his genius has been delivered in bondage to a soulless corporation like the C. P. R. Yet far be it from us to suggest that that most excellent company, representing the guiding light and the directing intelligence of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen, dined not wisely but too well. There may have been a time in the history of the profession the temptation to indulge beyond the bounds of discretion would have been too great to be resisted. But these old-bohemian days have passed away forever. They live only in the history of Penderennis and Warrington. Leaders and specialists and critiques and reviews are no longer ground out with wet towels wound around the head in the "cold grey day of the morning after."

We venture to say that the forty chefs and the three hundred waiters, and sundry of their friends had a merry time over the fragments of that feast, quaffing many a bumper of phiz and blowing many a ring of smoke to the health of the abstemious craftsmen of the twentieth century, whose mission it is to instruct statesmen in the art of cementing together the loosely-joined members of a powerful Empire.

IMPERIAL PRESS SERVICE.

The business of the Imperial Press Conference has been practically completed. All that remains to be done is the presentation of the recommendations adopted and the conclusions reached, in the form of resolutions, to the various governments of the different sections of the Empire. The chief end of the conference was to secure more effective and cheaper cable and telegraph communication between the Mother Country, the centre of the Imperial fabric, and the self-governing and remote portions of the Empire, the autonomous nations which in course of time must exceed in population, in wealth and strength, the nation from whose loins they sprang. Consciousness of the possibilities of the future of these youthful nations is now the most prominent feature of the Imperial statesmanship of the times. The movement which took form in summoning a conference of the newspaper men of the colonies was one of the results of that consciousness. The idea behind it, through cheaper means of communication, to keep the people of every portion of the Empire informed of the trend of thought, social, economic and political in the Empire as a whole.

Although the conference has hardly completed its business, its discussions have already borne fruit. One of the cable companies whose exorbitant rates have been the chief obstacle to the transmission of press messages has signified its willingness to make a reduction of tolls upon certain specified conditions. These concessions, as we understand the matter, are corresponding reductions in the "terminal" telegraph charges—that is, in the rates charged on the Australian land lines, which are owned and operated by the governments. This system of co-operation between the cable companies and the Australian governments, it is interesting to note in passing, is charged with having militated strongly against the success of the all-rod cable across the Pacific. Some of the most powerful of the Commonwealth newspapers are alleged to be deeply interested financially in the Eastern Cable Company and to be more concerned in the maintenance of an immensely profitable monopoly than in the consummation of the ideals of the more enthusiastic persons who advocate cheaper and better means of communication as a condition precedent to an Imperial news service. This view seems to be confirmed to the point of conviction by the fact that representatives of certain Australian newspapers voiced the only opposition raised to the most important recommendation of the press conference.

However these things may be, there is a strong probability that the scheme of an Imperial press service will be consummated. All the powerful newspapers of Great Britain are in favor of it. The leading journals of Canada support it with especial enthusiasm. The Australian and the New Zealand delegates, generally endorsed it, although some of them expressed doubts as to its practicability. The representatives of the South African Confederation expressed a desire to be placed upon the circuit. Signor Marconi indicated that the wireless telegraph might be expected to tender for a share in the business at rates which will make the old-line companies gasp. When such a wealthy and powerful and influential combination makes up its mind that the thing can be done, there are good reasons for looking forward hopefully to a successful issue. But the task is one of great magnitude. Obstacles will be encountered. There are governments to be convinced, corporations to be conciliated, possibly monopolies to be overcome. The battle will be a fierce one, and victory will not be won in a month or a year.

The London Graphic of June 5th contains some beautiful views of the fruit and nut-growing centres in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia. The Graphic points out that, since the beginning of the present century, the acreage under fruit in the province has increased from 7,500 to 100,000 acres. The conclusion of the great London illustrated is that British Columbia is destined to be known as the "Orchard State of the Empire." It would be hard to estimate the value of such an advertisement to the province.

PERSONALITY OF BRITISH SPEAKERS.

Character Sketch of the Presiding Officers of House of Commons.

The personality of the Speaker of the House of Commons embodies the spirit of the British parliament, and the presiding officer, the Right Hon. James William Lowther, is justly regarded by all those who have anything to do with parliamentary proceedings as a notable force in political life.

One of the characteristics of the House of Commons is that membership of it draws together in a common spirit men of all parties, Conservatives, Socialists and Liberals; those who are regarded in some quarters as most revolutionary become strenuous in upholding its traditions and jealous of encroachment on its privileges. The sharp divisions of party are sometimes absent even to the most ardent politician, but he cannot fail to be influenced by the striking continuity of character in each succeeding House of Commons and the remarkable similarity

New Arrivals in Furniture Are Priced Very Moderately

Parlor Tables

A SPLENDID DISPLAY of fine Parlor Tables is to be seen on the third floor. This lot embraces many new and novel designs which will be appreciated by those who know GOOD FURNITURE when they see it. They are in oak and mahogany, beautifully finished, while the prices are such as to demand the attention of all, ranging from \$15 down to \$4.50

Hall Racks

A SPLENDID LINE OF HALL RACKS of the much needed and popular kind is just to hand, beautifully finished in quarter-cut oak, golden oak of very handsome design and in Early English finish. Ranging in prices all the way from \$66 down to \$10.00

Ladies' Desks

NO MATTER WHAT YOU WISH in the way of a good Writing Desk, you will find it here. They are to be seen on the third floor in endless array, made of the finest oak and mahogany, and are made by firms who bear an enviable position in the manufacture of fine furniture. Prices ranging from \$18 down to \$14.00

Hall Mirrors

FOR THE PAST WHILE we have had numerous calls for Hall Mirrors, but owing to the heavy demand for Spencer furniture were unable to fill the orders for the time being. However, we are now in a position to please everybody in any style desired, in quarter cut oak, also Early English, at prices ranging from \$8.00

Curtains and Draperies for All Purposes at Economical Prices

Splendid values await you in our curtain and drapery department, our stock of muslins and fancy drapery being decidedly comprehensive, while the styles to be seen in lace curtains are too numerous to mention. It only needs your attendance to decide for yourself that this department will save you money.

NOTTINGHAM LACE CURTAINS, a specially attractive line, shown at \$1.25

Interesting News from the Carpet Department

When in the store do not fail to call at this department—it is simply aglow with all the latest creations and designs of Carpetdom. We make it a point to carry in stock only the best and newest designs and highest quality goods obtainable, and our wish is amply fulfilled by the large and select stock shown. For instance, we are showing a splendid line of

BRUSSELS CARPETS in conventional and floral designs, at, per yard \$1.00

DAVID SPENCER, LTD.

ity of the legislative gathering, whether Liberals or Conservatives predominated. That peculiar individuality of the House of Commons is, so to speak, enshrined in the person of the Speaker. The more faithfully he, without conscious effort, reflects in the more certain his name to go down to succeeding generations as one to be honored and revered, writes Frank Dilnot, parliamentary representative of the Daily Mail.

The present Speaker—succeeding distinguished men—has proved himself a genius among Speakers. He gives no favor and he knows no fear. The rights and privileges of the House of Commons are as safe in his hands as those of the prime minister or Mr. Balfour. One of the 670 members but will acclaim him for his just and happy rule; the vast majority without distinction of party are proud to call him friend.

The Right Hon. James Wm. Lowther, who comes of an old and distinguished parliamentary family, was born in 1855, the son of the Hon. William Lowther, who himself was in the House of Commons for a quarter of a century. Educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, Mr. J. W. Lowther was called to the bar in 1879 and elected to parliament in 1883. He was under-secretary for foreign affairs in 1891, and was appointed chairman of the committee of ways and means and deputy-speaker in 1895. In 1905 he became the Speaker. That is a brief outline of the official record of the man whose personal qualities have lifted him to something higher than official eminence. Curiously enough, his peculiar genius was not so apparent when he was acting in the secondary position of chairman in the House. Grumbling politicians have said, rightly or wrongly, that though Mr. Lowther was a great speaker, he was not a great politician, possible to detect in him occasionally the party man. One or two even shook their heads when he was made Speaker. And yet at the present time you may hear the most bitter Radical saying that Mr. Lowther is a model of all that a Speaker should be. They say no more than the truth. He knows no party in the chair; he is firm, witty and impartial guide of the proceedings. He is more than that, revolutionary become strenuous in upholding its traditions and jealous of encroachment on its privileges. The sharp divisions of party are sometimes absent even to the most ardent politician, but he cannot fail to be influenced by the striking continuity of character in each succeeding House of Commons and the remarkable similarity

knee breeches and silk stockings, and he gives to the old-world costume a grace and dignity only to be found where it is associated with strength and character. With strong, quick steps he mounts the dais of the chair; he takes his seat, adjusts his robes and opens the order paper for the day. The sergeant-at-arms, sword by his side, raises the great gilt mace to the table. Members sink to silence; the day's sitting has begun.

The present Speaker leads men in a way which makes them like being led. It is a pleasure to submit to his rule. During the first three-quarters of an hour questions may be poured in upon ministers, but members are not allowed to make anything in the nature of a speech. Supplementary inquiries arising from the ministers' replies are permissible, but members must not express their opinions. One day that irrepressible Nationalist, Mr. Swift MacNeil, bubbling with rage about some minor injustice, was rudely snuffed out by a sharp retort to Mr. Birrell, the chief secretary. Instantly the Speaker was on his feet. "The hon. member," he said gravely, "must put his interruption in the form of an interpellation." The House roared with laughter, and the Irishman enjoyed the reproof as much as anyone.

The Speaker must not only have hundreds of rules of order at his fingertips, but must be ready to meet a sudden emergency with a quick decision. Mr. Lowther rarely fails. An indignant Liberal below the gangway one day put a question which was ignored by the minister to whose office it was addressed. Not to be snubbed in this way the Liberal warmly demanded of the Speaker whether it was not a fact that a private member had a right to ask any question of ministers. "Certainly," replied the Speaker, in his full, rich voice. "Hon. members have the right to ask any question"—members cheered—"but that does not necessarily mean that ministers are compelled to answer them."

The laughter and applause that followed effectually extinguished any further protest, and while members were enjoying the report the Speaker called the next question.

A Man of Culture and Character. When Mr. Lowther was made Speaker the critics, while admitting many qualities, pointed out that he was not brilliant. There was probably some justification for this. He was not a great orator, he was not a commanding figure, he was not a political complexion, will have reason to be proud of him too.

"Sergeant-at-arms," cried the Speaker, in a voice like thunder, "remove the hon. member." His blue eyes were flashing. The indignity put upon the House by comparatively insignificant unit was reflected in every line of his body, every note of his voice. The House cheered him tumultuously. Mr. Grayson made a not very dignified exit.

The present House of Commons, with its overwhelming Liberal majority, is intensely proud of its Conservative Speaker. The House of Commons in the future, whatever its political complexion, will have reason to be proud of him too.

The time used in the Bill Committee from 8 to 10 o'clock, and from 10 to 11 o'clock, and from 11 to 12 o'clock, and from 12 to 1 o'clock, and from 1 to 2 o'clock, and from 2 to 3 o'clock, and from 3 to 4 o'clock, and from 4 to 5 o'clock, and from 5 to 6 o'clock, and from 6 to 7 o'clock, and from 7 to 8 o'clock, and from 8 to 9 o'clock, and from 9 to 10 o'clock, and from 10 to 11 o'clock, and from 11 to 12 o'clock, and from 12 to 1 o'clock, and from 1 to 2 o'clock, and from 2 to 3 o'clock, and from 3 to 4 o'clock, and from 4 to 5 o'clock, and from 5 to 6 o'clock, and from 6 to 7 o'clock, and from 7 to 8 o'clock, and from 8 to 9 o'clock, and from 9 to 10 o'clock, and from 10 to 11 o'clock, and from 11 to 12 o'clock, and from 12 to 1 o'clock, and from 1 to 2 o'clock, and from 2 to 3 o'clock, and from 3 to 4 o'clock, and from 4 to 5 o'clock, and from 5 to 6 o'clock, and from 6 to 7 o'clock, and from 7 to 8 o'clock, and from 8 to 9 o'clock, and from 9 to 10 o'clock, and from 10 to 11 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