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2271

NOTE AND COMMENT

The Vancouver World has a news story to the effect that there have been new discoveries of valuable coal deposits on Queen Charlotte Islands and that a powerful syndicate, at the back of which is Lord Northcliffe, has been formed for the purpose of developing these resources. The World claims to have got information showing that the applicants for a charter for a railway from Masset to Skidegate on Graham island, are in reality after the coal, as the charter carries with it power to mine, as well as to use such water power as may be convenient. The World goes on:

The man who is behind all this is J. C. Hewitt, of the Tacoma smelter. Mr. Hewitt is too well known in British Columbia, as he is in his own state of Washington, to need introduction. He has many interests in British Columbia, and is exactly the sort of man who is always welcome in this province. He has the faculty of knowing a good thing when he sees it, as his investment in the well known Marble Bay mine on Texada island proved, and he has the elusive faculty, from the newspaper man's standpoint, of keeping things to himself. For all this, it is known that he it is who has seen enough of the coal prospects of Graham island to go ahead with a thorough exploitation of the whole proposition. Clouded by all the mist of words in the application for a charter is the fact that coal of a quality not to be surpassed has been discovered. Just what the discoveries amount to is, of course, a matter which those who have paid for the finding will keep locked within their own breasts—even supposing that they have any real idea of what it amounts to themselves—but the fact that the whole group of islands lie in direct lines with Vancouver island, on which the mines are among the most valuable in the world, would serve to indicate that the value of the new discoveries may be incalculable. Lord Northcliffe, better known as the elder of the Harmsworth brothers, the British newspaper proprietors, is another who has seen the limitless wealth of Graham island. Agents working for him have purchased options on large tracts, where borings have shown coal, and a large company is now being formed in England to develop these fields.

"The Khan" has the following little "skit" in the Toronto Star. We think it will perhaps be admitted that there is a substratum of truth underlying the outcrop of humor:

"It seems to me," said the Proper Fool, "that these suffragettes are overdoing things, and if the ladies of the land knew what was good for them they would call them down pretty severely."

"For why?" inquired the Wild Ass.

"For every why. I have just come in from a walk about town, and I just about concluded that this city is built for women and their children. Folks are tearing down the old stores and building bigger and handsomer ones to accommodate the women and their young ones. Take the store out of this town devoted to women and their children, their clothes, their food, their toys, their playthings, their jewelry and ornaments, and the city would look as if it had been struck by a cyclone or ten years' famine.

"Even the churches are built for the women and their children. If the women didn't go to church, the armory, or the theatre, or any old skating rink would fill the bill. But this town is full of beautiful churches, one finer than the other, and they are chiefly for the women and their kids.

"The best magazines are women's journals and those devoted to children and youths, and a good child's story brings more money than any other piece of literature on the market.

"The women haven't got any good reason to kick. If they don't see what they want, all they've got to do is to ask for it, and if necessary we'll build a million-dollar factory to make it for her. Go into one of these big emporiums and ask for the gents' furnishing department, and you will rattle half the clerks. They don't know where it is. Finally the boss will come along with a manner half contemptuous, half apologetic, and will take you out to the back yard and point you out a kind of shed, where you can buy a tie or a celluloid collar, if you have the price. The ladies' hat department, or cloak, hose, whitewear, dress, or ribbon department wouldn't be found dead with that gents' furnishings store. No, sir; the suffragettes are rushing the season, and they are making a big mistake."

Under the caption "Talked Over Much," the Hamilton Spectator in a recent issue has this to say about Mr. Nichol's interview with a Montreal newspaper, on the political situation in British Columbia:

W. C. Nichol, of the Vancouver Province, has been talking to a Montreal newspaper reporter about British Columbia. The unusual experience—to a newspaper man—of being interviewed caused Mr. Nichol to say a good deal, and now that his opinions have appeared in print some of his British Columbia newspaper friends are taking exception. The ex-Hamiltonian assured the Montreal scribe that British Columbia was not going to secede, but he followed this statement with another that seems to leave a lingering doubt in the mind as to just what British Columbia might do if occasion arose. Said he: "Frankly we are out of touch and out of tune with the rest of the Dominion. I am not apprehending any annexation sentiment but there will be continued agitation until our demands are in some measure satisfied." There is just enough of vagueness and uncertainty about this statement of British Columbia's case to create the impression that if that province does not get what it wants there is no telling what may happen, even to the secession point. And the Victoria Colonist protests that no such idea finds place in British Columbia sentiment. We should hope not. The demands of the coast province may never be fully met by the Dominion government, but that there should be a secession sentiment preponderating as a result of this is something that one can hardly conceive in a province so thoroughly British as the Pacific coast province has always shown itself to be. It is most unlikely that Mr. Nichol intended to convey any such impression when he made the statement quoted above.

FORTY YEARS AGO

The British Colonist, Monday, December 28, 1868.

Pioneer Dead—The community was shocked in the midst of their merry-making on Saturday by the announcement of the sudden death of James Trahey one of our oldest and most respected citizens, who was found lying dead on the floor of a room in his house at an early hour in the morning by his servant. Mr. Trahey had been suffering for some time from palpitation of the heart and an inability to sleep in a recumbent position, and on Christmas night was made as comfortable as possible in an easy chair placed by the fire, while Mrs. Trahey, (worn out by assidious attention to his wants for several nights) retired to rest in an adjoining room. Deceased had apparently died without a struggle some hours before the body was discovered. Mr. Trahey was a native of Nova Scotia and had resided in Victoria since 1859, where he was engaged in shipbuilding. He possessed great ability in his line, and all the fine Fraser river steamboats, the Isabel, she and other craft were built by Mr. Trahey from his own models. His last work was the new steamer for Mr. Marvin, built to run on the Fraser river from Big Bar to Soda Creek. The departure hence of so estimable a man is a public loss which cannot easily be supplied. Mr. Trahey leaves a widow to whom he was devotedly attached, to lament his untimely death. The remains will be interred with full Masonic honors at 2 o'clock tomorrow afternoon—deceased having a few days ago been chosen W.M. of Victoria Lodge, A. F. & A. M.

ABOUT PEOPLE

Dr. Zaharin, who has just died in Moscow and left a fortune of over $1,000,000, was, says the London Chronicle, one the most famous as he was also one of the most eccentric physicians in Russia. Even when he was summoned to attend Tsar Alexander III. in his last illness Dr. Zaharin required the same preparation for his visit to the Palace as to any of his patients' homes. That is to say, all dogs had to be kept out of the way, all clocks stopped, and every door thrown wide open. Following a process of gradual undressing, he left his furs in the hall, his overcoat in the next room, his goloshes in the third, and, continuing, arrived at the bedside in ordinary indoor costume. This was only one phase of Dr. Zaharin's Golden theory that "you should take a rest before you are tired." Accordingly he sat down after walking every few yards, and every eight steps in going upstairs. From the patient's relatives and everyone else in the house he required absolute silence until he spoke to them, when his questions had to be answered by "Yes" or "No," and nothing more. To the actual patient, however, he was courtesy and consideration itself.

The Order of the Golden Fleece, which the Emperor Francis Joseph conferred on the occasion of his greater jubilee on the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at Paris, was originally a Burgundian Order, and was founded by Philip the Good in 1429. On the death of Charles the Bold the Grand Mastership passed to the House of Hapsburg by the marriage of Marie of Burgundy to Maximilian of Austria, afterwards Emperor of Germany; and after the abdication of Charles V. the rights of the Grand Mastership were retained by both the Austrian and Spanish branches of the house. The Austrian house bestows the Order only upon Catholics.

Mr. Birrell told a little story about the only time he wanted to consult a doctor at the annual dinner of the Royal Society of Medicine in London. "Only once in my life," he said, "did I feel persuaded that I was smitten with a mortal disease. I started on my way to consult a distinguished doctor. It was a hot July day, and I thought the time was come for my last walk. I walked from my house in the neighborhood of Addison Road to Harley street. I found the great physician's rooms crowded with patients, and while waiting I found on a table a book written by the great physician on the subject of this particular disease. The first words which caught my eyes were these—'The patient who is suffering from this disease never perspires.' I had Scotch blood in my veins so I picked up my hat and gloves and walked out."

It is rather curious, says the Manchester Guardian, that artillerymen should have as their patron a female saint. Yet it is a fact that Saint Barbara, whose festival fell the other day, is pretty generally recognised as the patron of gunners and sappers. According to the ancient narratives, it came about in this way: Saint Barbara was the daughter of a rich heathen named Dioscorus, who, in order to protect her from the outside world, kept her shut up in a tower. The time came when he had to go on a journey and when he returned he found that his daughter, for all his precautions, had become a Christian. He took her before the Prefect, who condemned her to be beheaded and her father himself carried out the sentence. On his way home he was struck by lightning and his body consumed. This legend caused Saint Barbara to be regarded as the saint to protect one from the dangers of thunderstorms and fire, and, later, when artillery was invented, by a curious analogy, as the patron of artillerymen and miners—the wielders of thunder and lightning, as it were.

There is a curious tribe of people in Ceylon called the Rodigas, who live the life of social Ishmaels, despised and cast out by their fellows. Until quite recently they lived apart from the abode of other men, in holes and caves; in no case may they lie down to rest with other men; they may not enter a temple or court of justice, and on all occasions are compelled to stand afar off. So low down in the scale of humanity are they that they may not even speak with strangers except through the intermediary of a man of the lowest caste above their own. Of late years their status has been improved, and they are less servile in consequence, but even now they fall on their knees with uplifted hands to address people of the lowest caste, and upon the approach of a traveller they shout to warn him to stop until they can get off the road, and he can pass without risk of defilement from the proximity of their persons. It is curious and yet so characteristic of society in all countries and all levels, that even among these people who seem to have reached the very lowest rung of the human ladder, there are classes and social distinctions. Thus the ambetteyos, or barbers, and the hanoleyros, or betel boxmakers, are looked upon with contempt by the despised Rodigas, who go to the length of tying up their dogs lest they should stray into the houses of the low-born, or gnaw a bone that they may throw to them.—Dundee Advertiser.

BRITISH OPINION

"When in doubt give a dinner" is a very good political maxim (says the Daily Telegraph.) The Radical party is very much in doubt at the present moment, and they gave the Prime Minister a dinner last night. Apart from the special circumstances of the moment, the compliment was appropriate and well deserved. Mr. Asquith is an excellent leader, and has deserved well of his party, and, if they did not acknowledge the debt they owe him, they would be ungrateful indeed. There was, however, a skeleton at the feast, and, with characteristic courage, the Prime Minister declined to ignore its presence. The name inscribed on the dry bones was "Failure," and Mr. Asquith acknowledged that they had assembled to "celebrate a failure." But he was not there to admit responsibility for the failure or to confess to any participation in the events that had robbed the unwelcome guest of flesh and blood. The hapless victim had been assassinated, and Mr. Asquith attended to denounce the author of the crime to his audience. Needless to say, the culprit is the House of Lords. Unionists, however, will accept the challenge with confidence and the certainty of victory, for the people of this country will assuredly never surrender the destinies of this empire to the uncontrolled authority of a single chamber, which the word of an imperious minister can gag and paralyze.

The Morning Post says: Mr. Asquith had no novel excuse to offer last night for refusing to dissolve. An outsider new to the English politics of today would infer from the Prime Minister's description of the "credentials" of the rejected measures that the government had only to appeal to the country to be returned with an undiminished majority and with a prestige that no second chamber could venture to flout. But no. The Lords should not be allowed to "dictate" the circumstances or date of a dissolution, and so the government, in the fulness of their public spirit, will forego the advantage of striking while the iron is hot. Even supposing, Mr. Asquith went on to argue, the Liberals did come back to office after a general election, what could they do if the Lords rejected the very same measures over again? The uninitiated might answer that this problem, never having arisen in practice, might be allowed to stand over until it does arise. Such was the best apology the Liberal leader could offer to an assembly, every man of whom knew in his heart that it rested on nothing but make-believe. With great solemnity he proceeded to assure them—speaking not for himself alone, but for all his colleagues—that the government would dissolve—when they thought fit. This was the official substance of the momentous declaration so eagerly awaited.

The Daily News is of opinion that the country will welcome Mr. Asquith's speech as a definite statement of the issue before us. It is a declaration of war against that part of the Constitution which now acts as a permanent barrier to all progress, and a permanent defence to all the interests of land, finance and brewing. From last night onwards the overthrow of the Lords' veto dominates the situation. All parties of progress, whether they call themselves Liberal, Labor or Nationalist, are now fighting for their very existence. Unless this contest is won, progress in England will be strangled by the hereditary chamber, and by their submission the people will deserve their fate. That all the people of light and leading among Liberals are aware how critical the contest has become was proved by the high enthusiasm with which Mr. Asquith's statement of the issue with the Lords was last night received. The memorial signed by over two hundred members has been an evidence in what direction the spirit of the most determined and courageous Liberals was tending. The party as a whole only calls for the lead, and Mr. Asquith has now put himself at the head of a movement that is not merely of service to the cause of Liberalism, but is essential to its continued existence.

The Standard says.—As Germany has never raised the smallest protest against the steady increase of the British fleet under Lord Goschen and Lord Spencer, so we have no justification for objecting to her recent naval enactments. All navies are constructed upon the hypothesis that they may have to fight, and therefore each fleet in the abstract is regarded as potential foe to the other. Prince Buelow only applied a general and uncontrovertible axiom of statesmanship to a particular case when he stated that "our position would become really bad, and that peace would be seriously endangered, at the moment at which we reduced our armaments below the level which our position in Europe requires." We have no hesitation in affirming that if this country had ordered its policy on this principle during the last three or four years the influence of Great Britain upon the councils of Europe would have carried very much more weight than it is now able to exercise.

Belfast Whig: Whatever the thoughts of Mr. Birrell's Nottingham audience may have been, there is no doubt whatever the reason why this government will not face the country is because they know for certain that if they did so they would be beaten. Mr. Asquith knows this, even Mr. Birrell knows it; but the damaging thing to the government is that the country knows it quite as well as they do, and that it estimates at its proper value the heroics in which it is sought to evade the challenge which the action of the House of Lords presents. Mr. Asquith took refuge in precedent, or rather, as he put it, in the absence of precedent. The unprecedented thing, however, is that the government should indulge in bluster and brag about the veto of the House of Lords and yet refuse to accept the responsibility which their language imposes. Mr. Asquith will neither dissolve nor will he inform the country what he means to do in the next session of parliament. The government does not, it seems, mean to be content with bringing forward non-controversial measures. The prime minister has evidently conceived a design of accomplishing great things in the matter of finance, over which the Lords' veto cannot be exercised. It is to be a popular, and of course a free trade, budget, and the Lords will not be able to impose any check upon the government's designs; but the question is, how can the imposition of additional taxes further the designs of the government in regard to the Lords' veto? The Lords may be unable to object, but the constituencies, so soon as they receive the opportunity, can and will do so.

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TELLS OF RICHES OF ARGENTINE REPUBLIC

Visitor Recounts Progress in Trade of Flourishing Country to the South

(From Sunday's Daily)

Mr. Thomas Mullaly, a resident of Buenos Aires, which city is so well situated for commercial and other purposes upon the broad waters of La Planta River, arrived in town yesterday and remained at the Empess until he was able to catch the night boat for Seattle and the south. He will go from Seattle to San Francisco and from thence to Toronto, Montreal and London, England, crossing to the continent and taking passage in one of the fine steamships which ply between Genoa, or Genova, to employ its real Italian name, and his home in Buenos Aires.

He states that the Argentine Republic, whose capital is Buenos Aires, or Pleasant Breezes, is now and has been for some years in a very prosperous condition.

He had hoped to be able to witness our great harvest scenes in the northwestern territories, but was detained in London, England.

"The Argentine Republic is indeed a great country, with an immense extent of pampas, which very exactly corresponds to our prairies, and it is well to know what our competitors in the principal markets of the world are doing," said he to a Colonist reporter last evening.

"Senor Jose Figueroa Alcorta has been the president of this flourishing country since 1906, and as the term extends over six years, he will retire from his high office in 1912.

During the first six months of the present year the imports were valued at $131,273,361, and the exports at $223,076,257, showing a balance in its favor of $91,802,896. The exports had increased by $37,641,814, and although the exports of agricultural products had advanced $50,739,000, pastoral products decreased $12,896,000 and forestry $112,800.

The national expenditure for the present year amounted to $232,645,535 in silver, showing an increase of two millions over 1907, while the expenditure for 1909 is estimated at $236,820,400, or a further increase of $4,174,874. Alcohol yielded about $16,700,000 last year; tobacco, $17,400,000; beer, $3,100,000, and matches, $2,800,000. Matches, the fourth largest item, are all made in the country, but upon each box must be placed a one cent stamp.

Argentina's frontiers measure 10,200 kilometres and contain 14 provinces and 10 territories and 2,950,520 square kilometres. Its population at the end of 1907 was 6,200,845, nearly one half of whom belong to foreign nationalities, comprising over a million of Italians, the Spaniards, French and Germans coming, as far as numbers are concerned, next in order. The number of English who live in the country is comparatively few, but the extent of their investments in railways, tramways, etc., etc., is enormous, exceeding £300,000,000, or approaching $1,500,000,000. It has been a favorite field for investment for English money, and although there have been some reverses, notably the crash of 1890, which brought down with it the great firm of Baring Bros., their profits have been uniformally large.

"The Italians work as navvies, etc., and thousands of them travel regularly to and fro, the seasons being diverse and assist in reaping the harvests, both of Italy and of their adopted country. But their children, who are born in the republic, become loyal and faithful citizens.

A Fine City.

"Buenos Aires is easily one of the finest capitals and most splendid cities in the world, and is embellished with a particularly magnificent opera house. Its population is 1,135,000; its streets are excellently lighted and paved, and the afternoon parade of the rank and fashion in this metropolis, always excites the ardent admiration of the visitor. The net increase in the population of the whole country in 1907 was 226,074; while it is estimated that it can readily afford ample means of subsistence to 200 millions or 67.78 scrum than their opponents and that, unquestionably, was due to the superiority of Leo Sweeney and others in hooking. No sooner had the sphere been placed than it was sent out towards the Bay quarter line. While the latter did not work together particularly well, passing and running to effect being difficult, they generally managed to make a little ground and eventually their repeated gains told. Cohan scored once or twice. Johnson took several of the kicks. They didn't seem to be hard. Assuredly the angles were not anything out of the way, but each time the ball swerved off just enough to miss. Nason took turns with Johnson, but his endeavors to hit the spot were alike futile.

The second half was much the same as the first, the Bays working much better in the pack and their quarters standing off their opponent's back division. At half back Lowry distinguished himself by his tackling. Once or twice he went after two or three men in quick succession and each time they came down with a thud which sent the water and mud flying in all directions. McFarlane also was prominent, while Bromley, though showing lack of training and practice, was somewhat conspicuous. Gillespie took to the water like a duck. He was here, there and everywhere and the oftener he could bring something down with him into one of the miniature lakes which were scattered over the playing area the happier he seemed. For the Bays Sweeney worked like a trojan. Bendrodt was splendid at quarterback, but made one fatal mistake and that was his disinclination to pass. Selfishness is his weakness and until he corrects it he will not be able to take the place to which he is properly entitled. Cohan and Nason also were well to the fore.

After another twenty minutes of scrambling through mud and water up and down the field, during which period the Bays ran up their scoring total by one or two tries, the whistle sounded. Three lusty cheers were given by each team and then the players dashed through water, scattering it as high as their heads, some using it to clean the mud from their limbs, to the dressing rooms.

Messrs. Moresby and Martin were on the field in the capacity of referees and coaches. They directed the play on both sides and although it was difficult under the circumstances to imbue the match with style or system, they did their best and had the satisfaction of giving the boys some good training if they didn't teach them much about the fine points of the pastime.

They are of the opinion that when the next representative fifteen is chosen it will be the strongest that has yet come out for Victoria.

That the possibilities of aerial navigation are no longer considered a matter for joking, but as a serious business proposition, is made clear by the following press cable from Berlin: "The German Aerostations Co., which was founded three months ago by three groups of financiers and sportsmen of Berlin, Frankfort and Cassel respectively, has now ordered seven of the Zeppelin airships. Three routes are scheduled, all beginning at Friedrichshafen, and taking in, among other places, Nuremburg, Leipsic, Berlin, Dresden, Strasburg and Hamburg. It is contemplated extending one route to Copenhagen. It is proposed to provide every calling point with a special station, at which the airships will be able to land in any weather. Special anchoring appliances have already been patented. Each airship will be designed to carry ten passengers besides the crew. The fares will be on a high scale. The company proposes to offer the government the use of its stations for war office airships, hoping thereby to secure a subvention."

The steamer Umatilla is due from San Francisco. She has 70 tons of general freight to land here.

The Fit-Reform

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HIS WHEREABOUTS IS STILL A MYSTERY

Man Who Disappeared Early in November Is Still Being Searched For

The search after Alexander Knowles, who mysteriously disappeared in Vancouver on November 3, and was last seen as he left the bus of the Hotel Metropole, grip in hand, to board the Princess Beatrice on his return to this city, has brought out no new facts tending to explain the mystery surrounding the man's disappearance. The local police authorities have done everything in their power to get some trace of the missing man, but witnout the slightest success. James Knowles, the brother of the missing man, is still in the city, a guest at the Dominion Hotel, waiting in the hope that some trace of his brother can be found.

After making a thorough search in Vancouver in which the authorities of that city participated, Detective Sergeant Thomas Palmer, of the local force, was unable to gain any clue to Knowles' whereabouts. It was thought that possibly Knowles, who was known to have suffered from the hallucination that he was being followed, might have boarded a boat or train at Vancouver under the impression that in so doing he would dodge his imaginary pursuers. But if such were the case it is hardly likely that some word would not have been heard of him ere this. When he resumed his mental balance he would doubtless, it is reasoned, have notified his sister, who is living here, having arrived after her brother so mysteriously disappeared. But not a hint of the man's whereabouts has been gained.

As a last recourse, the brother here will likely offer a reward for any information tending to locate the missing man. Circulars will be issued giving a description of Knowles, and these will be sent broadcast. This step appears to be about the only one left to the brother and sister.

The Matinee Hat in London.

London, Dec. 25.—The matinee hat is not going to die without a struggle. Mr. Tom B. Davis' experiment in prohibiting the wearing of hats at the matinee of "The Belle of Brittany," in the Queen's Theatre passed off quite successfully last Saturday. There were just one or two little difficulties in explaining the new rules to patrons, as the libraries did not always follow the example of the box-office in notifying their customers.

One lady, when requested to remove the shady flower-garden which crowned her coiffure, pleaded in anxious tones that some of her curls were affixed to the hat, and left the theatre with her escort. Another, having produced a ticket on which the new rule "Hats and bonnets not allowed," was not stamped, refused to take her hat off, and the manageress felt that under the circumstances she could not insist. The lady and her companion left the theatre, however, as the second act was beginning.

The Railway Commission has issued a circular pointing out that no application will be received unless there is proof of service on all interests concerned. In the event of orders being consented to, the proof of such consent must be adduced, and not only must notice be given, but plans have to be furnished. This action has been taken because in the past on the hearing of applications it was shown frequently that many parties affected were not notified to be in attendance.