

The Colonist.

MONDAY, MAY 23, 1898.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT.

The Premier of British Columbia, the Hon. J. H. Turner, was able to announce to the house yesterday that the liberal railway policy which the government recommended and the house endorsed, will immediately bear fruit in the construction of two of the railways from the coast to which it applies. The contract for the Coast-Teslin road is being prepared and will be signed as soon as it is completed, and work is about to be begun simultaneously at three points on the Coast Kootenay road. It must have been a proud moment for Mr. Turner when he made the above statement to the house. It is certainly a source of pride to the Colonist, as it is to all other friends of the administration, that the Premier was able to make such an announcement. The people of British Columbia, without distinction as to locality or party, will recognize that, whatever may have been their views as to the wisdom of the policy which found expression in the loan bill, it has the merit of success, and has been instrumental in introducing new and highly important factors into the industrial and commercial life of the province. Canadians everywhere will feel a high degree of satisfaction that British Columbia has shown herself equal to her unrivalled opportunities, and has not only faith in her own boundless resources, but the courage and ability necessary for their speedy development. The simple fact that because of the policy adopted by the provincial government and ratified by the house, eight hundred miles of railway will at once be begun by British Columbia, is of itself of prime importance, for it means the expenditure of millions of dollars in this province during the next few years for labor and material. This is only the first effect. One of these railways will tie the Coast and Kootenay more closely together, beside opening one of the richest sections of Canada. The other will bring the trade of the golden north to British Columbia, besides opening a vast region in the province of known value. For years past there has been talk of a railway to the Yukon, as one of the great undertakings of the future. It is now to be built, and to the sagacity of the British Columbia government and the good sense of the British Columbia legislature this happy result is due. While the legislature was actuated chiefly by a desire to promote the interests of the province when it assented to the subsidy to the Coast-Teslin road, it is entitled to credit for having struck a good blow for Canadian interests in the North. The rivalry for the Yukon trade has been keen, and Canada has found in the business men of the United States competitors who were difficult to overcome. The latter had certain advantages by which they well knew how to profit, and they have been and would have continued for all time to come to be a thorn in the side of Canadian northern trade unless an all-Canadian route to the gold fields had been provided for. The effort of the Dominion government to secure such a route having failed, if British Columbia had not stepped forward in the very nick of time with a feasible scheme, other projects, prejudicial to Canadian interests, would necessarily have been advanced and with their success the chance of a line to a British Columbia seaport would have become very remote. The far-sighted and energetic action of the British Columbia government, backed up by the majority of the legislature, has been able to secure for Canada a way whereby it can control the trade of her own territory. In the feelings of satisfaction arising out of the Premier's announcement the members of the opposition, as such, have no share. An invitation was extended to them to unite with the government in passing the loan bill so as to make it appear to the world that British Columbians are a unit when it comes to faith in the country and a determination to develop it. But the invitation was rejected, and the old and time-worn policy of cautious opposition was resorted to. The new impetus which every interest in British Columbia will now receive will come in spite of all the opposition of a political party could do to prevent it. If the opposition could have had its way not one of the contracts that have been already let in connection with the proposed railways, not one of those that will soon be let, not one of the large purchases of merchandise already made and to be made, not one of the great sales of farm produce that will certainly take place in the immediate future, and none of the employment soon to be given to thousands of men at good wages, could have been realized. In the good times, which they are soon to enjoy as the result of the government's courageous and well-devised railway policy the people of British Columbia will not forget that the provincial opposition did everything possible to defeat the plans which have so speedily borne such excellent fruit.

THE PROVINCIAL FINANCES. The News-Advertiser does not assent to the proposition that the localities which are opened to occupation by new highways and railways will reimburse the province for the outlay, and it takes in an ex cathedra way about what has been proved upon this point by the experience of the South American countries and the various parts of the British Empire. Guileless readers are expected to assume from this that our esteemed contemporary has the financial history of the universe down pat and is able to produce irrefutable proof of its position as above. This is a way the Vancouver

paper has, and we are bound to say it is a very plausible way of handling public questions. We may beg leave, however, to express a shadow of doubt if the News-Advertiser has mastered the financial problem of all civilization and is in a position to lay down laws which must be accepted as infallible. The most distinguished writers on political economy are content to put forward general propositions tentatively. The Vancouver authority has a soul above half measures, and when it needs a principle to base an argument upon, it propounds one with all the positiveness of a proposition in Euclid. The Colonist ventures to suggest that there is at least a margin for doubt as to the infallibility of its contemporary's universal law of finance.

If it is correct that as population and business increase over the province the contributions of the people to the revenue will not bear a larger proportion to the expenditure than they do when the settled districts are few and far between, British Columbia is certainly in a very bad way, it is necessary at once and forever to put an end to expenditures on capital account and people in remote or new sections must be content to wait for necessary improvements until they themselves are able to pay for them. Clearly it will not pay to borrow money to develop a locality, if the demands of that locality upon the provincial revenue will bear a greater portion of its contributions after developments than it did before. It is evident from the records of our own province, without going to South America or the Sandwich Islands for proof, that the sparsely settled localities do not pay into the revenue as much as they receive out of it, and if, as they grow more populous and richer and therefore contribute more to the revenue than they do now, the proportionate excess of their demands upon the treasury will increase, the province is on the high road to bankruptcy and no power on earth can stop it. The News-Advertiser talks about changing the incidence of taxation, reforming the financial system and other matters of that nature; but that will not hold the case any. If the more money spent in making a locality fit to live in the greater will be the demands of the locality for expenditures and the less proportionately it will contribute to meet that expenditure, it matters little how the incidence of taxation falls or upon what system taxes are levied and expended. Under any possible plan that can be suggested there is ruin ahead, and all the taxpayers have is a choice of the manner in which they will be shipwrecked.

The history of British Columbia does not bear out what our contemporary contends is the general law or justify its gloomy forebodings. This is proved by the fact that if no extraordinary expenditures were made on public works, there would be a substantial surplus out of the revenue now collected. It cannot be successfully gossiped that if the legislature of British Columbia would stop voting money to open new parts of the province, would repeal its act authorizing any further railway subsidies and confine itself solely to providing for the wants of those special localities that are already developed, the rate of taxation would steadily decrease from year to year. All the necessary administrative machinery is provided for that part of the province which is already occupied. If ten times as many people lived in it no additional machinery would be called for. An additional clerk, or school teacher or policeman would be needed from time to time, but the contributions of the new people to the revenue would more than meet the expense of this. There is no manner of doubt that if the province were content to go along simply keeping up what now established in the way of public works, repairing them when they need it, but not reaching out to provide for new comers in new sections, there would be a large surplus every year at the present rate of taxation. But such a policy as this would not be tolerated by the people. There is a demand for expansion, and this demand the government has endeavored to meet in the only way in which it could be met, namely, by borrowing the money.

It is quite true that a policy of un- limited borrowing cannot be a permanent one. There is a stage when it is necessary to stop in every financial transaction. Probably, indeed we hold that it is indispensable, that for the next few years the province will have to go slow in expenditures on capital account and in granting aid to railways. Time must be given for the seed that has been sown to produce a crop before a new sowing is made. If the results are obtained, which we are sure even the News-Advertiser hopes for, the next five years will witness such a change in the condition of the province, that if further expenditures are needed on a large scale it will be good financial policy to make them. It is fair in judging of the policy which the government has adopted to consider the arguments which the government has advanced in support of it. If the government had been persuaded that the News-Advertiser's position is right, it would not have asked the house to sanction large capital expenditures and pledge itself to railway subsidies. If it believed as the News-Advertiser does, it would have let things drift along as they have been going. But in that case what would have been the complaint of the News-Advertiser? It would have been that the government was neglectful of the needs of the province, that it was a do-nothing, incompetent and careless administration. We would have heard the most strenuous sort of a demand for an aggressive policy. From the same source as now come complaints that too much has been attempted. We do not dissent from one position taken by our contemporary, for indeed it is one which the Colonist has already advanced, namely that the province is fact outgrowing its present financial system and its present methods of ad-

ministration. Changes will have to be made; but these changes can only in a slight degree affect the rate of taxation. What the Colonist looks forward to is a time when the provincial government will have less responsibility for local administration, and therefore will need a smaller establishment and less revenue; but there is no way in which the public service can be made to cost the people much less than it does now in the aggregate, although a part of the taxes now collected and expended by the province may be collected and expended by local organizations. Reduction of the aggregate taxation will come when population and wealth increase sufficiently to overbalance the growing needs of the several localities. In other words, it will doubtless be found possible to reduce the expense of the provincial establishment by throwing the cost of local affairs on local governing bodies, which can regulate the cost as seems best to the people of the several localities. If this is what the News-Advertiser means by reform in our financial system, the Colonist is prepared to join with it in an endeavor to discover a satisfactory method of introducing it, although with considerable misgiving as to whether the movement is not premature.

The reference to Mr. Tom Kains in the Times report of the proceedings before the commission was positively untrue. Mr. Kains has very serious domestic trouble, his wife having been extremely ill for some weeks, and one of his children being afflicted with congestion of the lungs so that he has been greatly worried both day and night. It is also well known to every one that Mr. Kains in ordinary conversation is at times somewhat embarrassed in speaking. Under these circumstances to speak of him as the Times did was in the highest degree cruel.

THE HON. MR. TURNER.

The Hon. John Herbert Turner has during the session just closed taken a proud position among the provincial premiers of Canada. A grave crisis had broken in the affairs of British Columbia and he proved equal to it. It is never pleasant to make comparisons, but it is permissible to say that the record of the province do not disclose anything which, in the importance of its bearing upon the future welfare of British Columbia, can compare with the railway policy, to which Mr. Turner obtained the assent of the legislature. It is doubtful if even the most sanguine fully appreciate what the success of this policy will mean for the province, and there only remains the Coast-Queensland road to be undertaken to make the whole policy successful. The construction of three new railways from the Coast of British Columbia to the interior must necessarily be revolutionary, and by inaugurating and carrying through a policy which has rendered possible a revolution in the province, Mr. Turner has risen to the rank of a statesman. The city of Victoria feels proud of her representative, who during his short premiership has exhibited so much courage and foresight combined with prudence and sagacity.

As a departmental officer Mr. Turner has made an admirable record. The most querulous critic of the government will not deny him this credit. Easily approached, ready to oblige at all times, careful of the feelings of his opponents and never forgetful of the fact that public office is a public trust, he has set the whole country an example of modesty, efficiency and strength, well worthy of emulation.

With such a record, with such a policy inaugurated, Mr. Turner will not appeal in vain to the people for an expression of confidence. He stands easily first among the public men of the province, and the voters will be more than pleased to have him retain office to supervise the execution of the policy for which he is, more than any one else, responsible. To him personally it is of doubtful advantage to continue in public life. He is at that age when opportunities to gain a competency in business can only rarely come, and every one knows, or ought to know, that a cabinet position is not financially remunerative, at least to such a degree that even by a long term of office a man can accumulate sufficient to provide for old age. It is therefore at considerable personal sacrifice that Mr. Turner remains in the political arena and gives his services to the province with whose interests he has been for so long a time identified. The Colonist voices the sentiments of all his friends, and even those who have been opposed to him are his friends, in expressing the earnest hope that he may long be spared to enjoy the reputation he has won and to see the fruits of the progressive policy which he has inaugurated.

THE MORTGAGE TAX.

In the report of the public meeting at Sooke, printed in another column, will be found a letter from Hon. C. E. Pooley, which was read on that occasion. Especial attention is directed to that portion of the speech which dealt with the so-called mortgage tax. The opponents of the government have endeavored to create the impression that the ministers were averse to lifting the burden of this tax from the shoulders of the mortgagors; but nothing is further from the truth. The government desires to grant relief, but it wants that relief to be real and not imaginary. As Mr. Pooley says the problem is an intricate one. Irresponsible demagogues may easily harangue for hours about it and pretend that it is simplicity itself; but no one has yet suggested a remedy that is not as objectionable as the evil intended to be cured. In providing for a commission to inquire into this and

the other financial difficulties under which the farmers of British Columbia labor, the government has taken the wisest possible course. There is nothing of a partisan nature in this question. Every one admits that the incidence of the tax is upon the wrong person, and the problem is to discover how to make it rest where it properly belongs. There is good ground for hope that by the next meeting of the house a resolution of the difficulty will be found.

WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

The action of the senate majority in regard to what is known as the Hamilton Smith railway project is inexplicable. One can understand why, when opposing the arrangement with MacKenzie, Mann & Co., on the ground that the subsidy was excessive, senators might urge an alternative proposition upon the attention of parliament. But when that arrangement had been defeated and the British Columbia legislature had made certain the construction of an all-Canadian line from a Canadian seaport to the Canadian gold fields of the Yukon, it passes comprehension why the senate of Canada should insist on pressing forward a project, expressly designed to secure to United States merchants and transportation companies a share of the Canadian traffic and to build up an important city on territory controlled by the United States. Yet this is the course which the senate majority has seen fit to take and to say it is incomprehensible is to apply a mild term. There never was anything just like it in the history of Canada. The government and legislature of British Columbia by a substantial majority decided to assist a railway to the Yukon, but the assistance is given upon such terms that the province itself will directly derive benefit from the earnings of the line. Nevertheless it suits the senate majority to seek to grant a franchise to a company, which will compete with the creation of the British Columbia legislature in the financial market, and if both roads should be built will be a competitor with the line in the earnings of which this province has a direct interest. It is certainly of the greatest importance not only to British Columbia but to the whole of Canada that the gold fields of the Yukon should be developed and exploited from a Canadian base. The action of the British Columbia legislature will make this possible. The action of the senate majority, if it should unhappily prove successful, will defeat this desirable object. If the Yukon mines are as rich as seems to be the case, the trade of the district will be very large, and the terminal point of the railway leading to the interior will be a city of very considerable importance. There need be no surprise if in a very few years it becomes equal in population to any of the present cities. Wherever this city is located it will be built up chiefly by contributions from Canadian trade. Interior Alaska will contribute its quota, but by far the greater part will come from Canadian sources. What we mean by this is not the charges which will be imposed by either government upon commerce, for this is a very small part of the matter. The city will be built up because large sums of money will be paid out for the handling of merchandise and the other industries appurtenant to a seaport. These disbursements will be chiefly on account of Canadian trade. If they are made at Pyramid Harbor or the head of Lynn Canal an American city will be built up by them, where American capital will be invested and which will draw all its supplies from the United States. If they are made at the British Columbia terminus of the Coast-Teslin line the city will be built up in Canada by Canadian capital and to draw its supplies from Canada. The prestige of Alaska will be greatly enhanced by the former, that of Canada by the latter. The wish patriotic enterprise the government and legislature of British Columbia have arisen to the great emergency and have consummated a plan, whereby the great interests of Canada in the premises will be safeguarded. And yet the senate majority insists on urging forward the scheme for the enhancement of the interests of the United States.

We repeat that the action of the senate majority is utterly beyond comprehension, and it is to be hoped that in the interests of Canada the House of Commons will not tolerate this attempt to nullify the splendid action of British Columbia. We only mention in passing that the all-Canadian road will develop valuable territory in British Columbia, and that in point of cost transportation over it will be as cheap as by any other line, and in the matter of speed and availability at all seasons, the all-Canadian road will be incomparably the better. "What is 'time immortal,' Uncle Jim?" "Time immortal is as far back as you feel posted on ancient history."—Chicago Record.

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GODFREY MAY CQME. England's Greatest Band and Bandmaster on the Way Through Canada. It is quite probable that Lieut. Dan Godfrey and his great band which arrived at Halifax on Monday, the 16th of April and who purposed going to Manitoba to British Columbia, giving an opportunity of hearing the greatest bandmaster the annals of the English army have ever known with forty of the leading military musicians who have served in the Grenadier Guards and other Guards regiments. For forty years bandmaster of the Grenadier Guards, Dan Godfrey made himself one of the most popular men in England and his band the finest in the army. The band which he has brought to Canada, however, under the enterprising direction of Mr. C. A. E. Harris, is, according to Lieut. Godfrey's own statement, the best gathering he has ever got together. If Lieut. Godfrey comes West only a brief notice will be given to the public, but it is safe to say that all who can do so will flock to hear the band to whose music have marched all England's military heroes of the day. Hard Luck appears to be pursuing Bert Collyer, who started for Dawson City with a special "war extra" on the 28th of April and who purposed going in light over the White pass and coming down with the first river steamer in the spring. A letter just received from the trail, he had been totally blind for three days and was suffering intense pain from cramps. The Mount-ed Police took both him and his packs to Buffalo Camp, and their surgeon did all that could be done for him. His blindness will not be permanent, having been caused entirely by the sun glare on the snow, and he expects to resume his interrupted journey in a short time. BRADSTREET'S REVIEW. Business Continues Brisk in the United States—Favorable Reports From Dominion Also. New York, May 20.—Bradstreet's tomorrow will say: "The excellent foreign demand at good prices for products of American agriculture is, as for some time past, the leading feature of the country's trade. Second only to this as of necessity forming an important link in the chain of good trade, may be mentioned the almost uniformly good crop situation, furnishing the best evidence that foreign demands, now and in the future, will be adequately met. The immense volume of trade already piled up in this country, favor of course constitutes an element of strength which in its effect on the money market can hardly be exceeded. Naturally dependent demand is the activity visible in nearly all lines of transportation, showing that this industry, like others, is sharing to the full in the proportion of business having its rise in our heavy exports. An increased willingness to regard the existing war as merely an incident in the course of business seems evident from the trade reports received this week. The volumes of bank clearings, reports of railway clearings, the movements of prices and the reports of the iron and steel trade, all seem to concur in indicating a maximum volume of business for the period of the year with even greater hopefulness manifested than for some time past. Wheat exports are larger than for two weeks past. Corn exports are slightly smaller. A fair trade is reported in the Dominion of Canada. An active demand for dry goods is reported from the West. The woolen mills are busy. Hides are scarce and firm; and hardware is advancing. Montreal reports canned goods firm, molasses purchases restricted as a result of the war, and dry goods jobbers well pleased with the business done, although failures early in the year cut profits. Halifax reports the season backward and high rates checking lumber shipments to Great Britain. The outfitting trade is active at Victoria. Vancouver with collections good. Business failures in the Dominion aggregate 30 against 25 last year, 31 in this week a year ago and 28 in 1896. Bank clearings for the Dominion of Canada were as follows: Montreal, \$12,797,403, increase 7.6; Toronto, \$7,874,959, increase 15.2; Winnipeg, \$2,122,809, increase 57.2; Halifax, \$1,112,679, increase 8.2; Hamilton, \$683,835, increase 12.6; St. John, N.B., \$615,681, increase 1.8.

FIFTY-FIVE WASHINGTON Navy Department New Except the Two Ca Reports of Decisly not Credited—Troila Leave Washington, May 20. Hapase into sensational Washington to-day aric parative quietude. R the way from the cap Mangrove with a crew to the reported destruc sive Spanish fleet of 27 Sshley's combined fore-circulated with persiste ing denials as soon a brought to the attende capable of passing ju accuracy. May 24.— officials themselves bec as was shown by the per bulletins. At the however, it was again most positive manner t payment has not been the report of any sort in the Windward passag specifically deal with the West Indies, but it v that the department has itself to let the public thing in the nature of a ment possibly the bulleti is sufficient to cover t made at 6:35 this after noon. "The department has here that a battle has Windward passage. The auxiliary cruiser cut the cable at Santia San Juan de Porto Rico IS CERVILLA GOIN Washington, May 24.— partment have advices fr the torpedo boat destroy and Froscopino, have bee and are ready to start fleet as soon as it reach route to the Philippines. XIII, and Palao are exp sent ready to start at Cádiz with the home navy department is sus news so far as it relat reports. May 24.—A dews from Mad is announced and to-morrow uld not be surpr tachment had ab "cause of Cam onment at an an ug westward, ver its departu 'S FOUR-PHIL Transports—Sisco To-day—St Manila Desperancisco, May 24. the 14th Infan regiment of Orga ledk battalion of it tillery, left the B the transports Australia, gopans ania. The ship de docks and an on near the City. The finishing touches rgoes of the trans morning the three-l Iowa. beans, May 24.—4 aents of infantry of cavalry, while at the fair grou the former two-ppines via San Francisco. The 25 are 1,220 strong, der 6:12. York, May 24.—A ld from Hong Ko e and present is exch ed staff is nearly will exhaust all sup is said to be prep ed. States Consul zens fear an uth control the surro d Chief Aguinada as staff to organize th as are moving fro als say that 500 w ounded in the bon arrival of our t chness on our ship, her despatch fro piled up German co land provision ship, but Ad permission. released, according that he would fo the protection of t but Admiral Dew upon the cruisers, land supplies was cial to the New York, Jamaica, says: "By the military su day announces the ve Anglo-American es that a war crisi sely affected. Tron ad naval leaves hav supplies for eight ag stored."