Weekly Colonist.

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THE SCANDAL OF THE GUNS.

There seems to be little doubt that things have been going from bad to worse as regards the actual results of gun-making in Great Britain. Few outside of the Departments know the truth of the matter, but it would now seem to be unquestionable that the captains of a large number of English men-of-war have received orders not to fire their big guns, some of the ships placed under this prohibition being left to be the sole protectors of important national interests. Mr. Armit describes the condition of the 38-ton guns on board Her Majesty's ship Ajax, and of several of the new 7 ton guns in India, and is able to make, without fear of contradiction, the assertion that "England has at this moment no artillery armament wherewith to defend her interests and her honour, either at home or abroad." While Britain is engineering and mechanical skill, and in the power of making metals, holds the first place in the world as regards guns, she would, in the event of war at short notice, have to become suppliant to Herr Krupp for the means of protecting the national existence. Charges of incompetency, too, have been formulated against the Departments, and glaring cases of dishonesty and fraud pointed out. We have suffered much from the departments, says the St. James' Gazette in a timely article, and we have suffered it without revolt because we have hitherto had the fullest reliance upon their integrity and honor. Slow and pedantic we knew them to be, and it has gone near to be thought that they were intolerably stupid for sundry generations. But we have compulsorily believed that by dint of costly experiment and under a steady fire of criticism, our departments did somehow, or other in their own lumbering fashion, contrive to reach sound conclusions at last. We knew that they blundered, and we knew that their manners were portentously military and pompous. But we believed both blunders and delays to be honest. We never suspected the least taint of dishonesty or fraud in the public service, and scandalous rumors of the kind were very generally resented as a slur on the national honesty. Now we hear, for the first time, charges of a sort that cannot be ignored against the honesty of perhaps the most important office of all. The break-down in our armaments can no longer be concealed. "Guns which burst, rifles and cartridges which jam, bayonets which bend, and swords which will not cut" have been revealing their remarkable properties in all branches of the service and men of character and positions come forward and declare that the defects in our national armament are directly due to the corruption of high officials in the public service. They offer to adduce proofs of specific acts of fraud and perjury committed by the permanent officials to whom our new system of Ministerial irresponsibility leaves a control which is practically absolute over our national defences. The fact that our artillery system in particular is radically defective has just received a scandalous proof, in the complete collapse of the heavy guns of one of our newest and most powerful men-of-war, and the discussion provoked by this catastrophe has elicited the scarcely creditable report that a large number of English men-of-war have received imperative orders not to fire their guns except against an enemy, and that several of these ships are in sole charge of important stations. Facts like these, if indeed they are the truth, can only be explained by the incompetence or the dishonesty of the officials responsible for the guns. We are the greatest workers of steel and iron the world has ever known. It is incredible that our administrators, with all the resources of the state at their disposal, are unable to cast solid cannon, or to bore bayonets and sword-blades without a flaw! The public will not readily believe it; and until the matter is cleared up by thorough inquiry they will be forced reluctantly to accept the only possible alternative judgment—that the officials in question have their bread reasons for arming our soldiers and sailors with unserviceable weapons.

GENERAL BOULANGER.

Dispatches in this issue show that Gen. Boulanger, the French minister of war, is getting deeper and deeper in the mire. The charges of infidelity to the republic, published in the Figaro last week, are largely believed, and there is little doubt that the radicals, now in the ascendant, who made Boulanger a kind of idol not so long ago, will have him ousted before another week passes. There has been a deal of talk in the republican organs about the strong republican proclivities of the army, but the army is full of officers and men who would follow an enterprising military leader in a coup. So great is the rage for titles of nobility, which the republic has declared extinct, that sons and nephews of the old titled aristocracy write the old distinctions before their names. One general of division has issued an order to his officers prohibiting the use of such titles, but they keep up the practice.

SIR JOHN'S DEPARTURE.

Sir John and Lady Macdonald leave our city this morning on their homeward journey. They have spent several weeks in the Queen city of the West and are unmarred of the place and people. It is pleasing to know that the Premier's health has greatly improved and that as a result of our salubrious climate he returns to his arduous labors refreshed, ready to do valiant battle in the future as in the past for the Dominion which he has so well laid of which he is the brightest ornament. Victoria has endeavored to do him honor. The public reception at the Victoria theatre was a great outpouring of the people's regard and affection for the grand old chieftain, whose name is a household word in every part of our vast country, cherished as well in the humble cottage of the poor as in the stately mansions of the rich. Sir John on that occasion spoke like the great statesman he is, and justly prided himself on the completion of one great national highway. Sir John, as the leader of the liberal-conservative party of Canada, must have been highly gratified to find that the people of British Columbia were as staunch with his policy and loyal to his government. He must feel greatly cheered to know that his arduous labors to secure this province in union are prized at their true worth, and that he has the confidence of all the people. Sir John has paid us his first visit, but we hope not his last. Many years of usefulness are yet before him and we have no doubt that, like the gentle old warhorse he is, he will die in harness, fighting his country's battles. Lady Macdonald has, we think, enjoyed her stay to the full. She has had ample opportunity to visit all the points of interest in the vicinity, and is charmed with our surroundings. She will regretfully leave Victoria, and will carry away many delightful recollections of Victoria and Victorians. We are sure that only the strongest good wishes will follow the Premier's family, from the province, which he has so ably helped to develop and which he has so ably helped to develop and which he has so ably helped to develop and