The Colonist.

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THE ROSSLAND MINERS.

By far the most interesting thing in the current news is the decision of the Rossland miners to accept a reduced rate of wages so that work may be continued at the mines. The spirit exhibited on both sides has been admirable. On the part of the employers there has been frankness, and on the part of the employees sound common sense. The result is that instead of a suspension of operations, at a time when there is a lack of work in many lines, there will be steady employment. The whole Rossland community will directly benefit by this, and we believe the effect upon business throughout the province will be highly beneficial.

The Rossland miners have struck the right key-note and the result will be harmony, even beyond the immediate sphere affected by this action. The Colonist congratulates them very heartily upon the excellent judgment they have shown, it also congratulates the mine managers upon the evidence thus afforded of a good understanding between them and their men. In the spirit, which this happy adjustment of a somewhat difficult situation demonstrates, we find a good augury for the future of the province and a proof of the usefulness of labor unions, when they are left to themselves, and, free from the interference of agitators, undertake to deal with business questions. If this spirit is general throughout British Columbia the general industrial situation will be greatly relieved. We have only to add that, when improved business conditions warrant, the mine owners should show a willingness to reciprocate in carrying out the excellent understanding which seems to have been inaugurated.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Duma has declared that the Czar is no longer "Autocrat of all the Russias." The world will now have an opportunity of learning what is in a name. Evidently the Czar has reckoned without his host. He thought he had a Duma that would fall in very readily with his views. He tried twice, and failed, and the present occasion looks like a case of "three times and out." Of what value to the cause of Russian liberty a declaration that the country is no longer governed by an autocrat will be, it is impossible at this distance to say. As a matter of fact it is almost impossible to say anything worth while about Russia, for the reason that so little is known of what is going on in that country. One naturally thinks however, that a declaration by a body representative of the nation, that is as representative as a body can be when it has been chosen under close official supervision, that the powers of the Emperor have been curtailed, and that his most cherished title is no longer to be given to him, indicates that there is a movement in progress, the force of which cannot very well be estimated. So far as the rights of individual Russians are concerned, the triumph of the Constitutionalists counts for very little. There will still be arrests without warrant and punishment of all degrees of severity without anything like the semblance of a fair trial, but the vote will encourage those, who are fighting for true representative government. It will likewise influence the minds of those who are determined to preserve absolutism with all that is implied therein.

EXPORT OF PULP WOOD.

A strong movement is on foot in the eastern provinces for the passage of an Act by the Dominion Parliament, forbidding the export of pulp wood from Canada. The people who are behind the agitation are disseminating a great deal of literature, in which they set forth facts in regard to the pulp industry that seem to make out an unanswerable case. It is in Quebec that the movement has taken hold most strongly, which is natural enough because the manufacture of pulp and paper is very likely to become the greatest industry of that province. The right to pass a law forbidding such exports rests with the Dominion Parliament. Provincial legislatures have undoubtedly the power to qualify timber leases or licenses so as practically prohibit the export of wood cut under them, but a law prohibitive of any line of export would, we think, have to be passed by Parliament to be constitutional.

The pulp industry has not yet been inaugurated on the Pacific Coast, but there are good reasons to believe that it soon will be. Time is necessary to consummate plans to that end, for the field is a new one and the amount of money required is large. Yet the prospects for two or more plants are excellent. We do not think that pulp wood can be exported from this province at present, but whether it can or not, we are very strongly in favor of the passage of a law prohibiting its exportation.

As has been pointed out by the advocates of the measure, the exportation of the wood will not be sufficient. The demand for paper is vast and is rapidly increasing. The supply of pulp woods, though very great in Canada, is not unlimited. It is a very easy thing to be mistaken as to the extent of forests and the amount of timber that they contain. Only a very short time ago the timber exerts of the United States government reported that the forests of Wisconsin were inexhaustible. They are now on the verge of exhaustion. A recent investigator claims that in twenty years the United States will be practically denuded of merchantable timber. Therefore, while we have undoubtedly vast forest areas in Canada, their exhaustion is something that we ought to begin to contemplate now and provide against. This can only be done by the adoption of a policy of forest protection and reforestation. We observe that Lieutenant- Governor Tweedie, of New Brunswick, has lately been delivering an address upon this subject and urging it upon the attention of the people. Forest wealth can be preserved and made permanent if the proper steps are taken. There must be restrictions on cutting; there must be means adopted to prevent full grown trees as well as young growth from destruction. Perhaps it would be no exaggeration to say that for every $100 worth of timber that has been actually utilized in Canada another $100 worth of present or potential value has been destroyed. Reforestation is of enormous importance. There are areas, of course, where when the trees have been cut farms will be made, but there are others which are fit for nothing else than to support a forest growth, and steps ought to be taken to restore the growth that has been cut away. But while we speak of such areas as fit only for this purpose, we would not wish to be understood as suggesting that this is a subordinate purpose. The welfare of the whole country depends upon the preservation of its forests. Without them we would have no rivers, but only torrents. We would no longer have gentle rains but tremendous downpours, alternating with periods of drought. We ought not to be blind to the lessons of history in this regard. Northern Africa and Syria were once magnificently wooded. Every one has heard of the cedars of Lebanon, which formed a great forest belt extending from the shores of the Mediterraneon to the borders of Persia. They were cut away, and the country, which once supported a teeming population, has become little else than a desert. On every hand are the remains of ruined cities, some of them absolutely deserted and others inhabited by a few score people, where once there were as many thousands. Antioch, at one time a city of 300,000 souls, has less than one-tenth that number now. This great change is due to the cutting away of the forest. But it is not necessary to go so far away for examples. The rivers, which take their rise in the Allegheny Mountains are rapidly losing volume and becoming filled up with sand and other debris. There may perhaps be no diminution in the rainfall, but the waters run off in floods, which carry destruction with them in many cases, and by them the hills are washed clear of earth, sand and gravel, which is deposited in the lower river beds. These are no theoretical evils, but are of annual occurrence. In one of the reports to the United States government it is stated that the Ohio river is filling up more rapidly than it can be dredged out. We find the same thing, although on a smaller scale, in Ontario. In one of his reports the late Samuel Wilmot, inspector of fisheries, said that in his boyhood he caught salmon in streams where now there are cultivated fields. This forestry question is of supreme importance, and the preservation of pulp wood for manufacture in the Dominion is only one phase of it.

POLICE AND PISTOLS

An exceedingly interesting case was tried in Winnipeg recently. A man named Gans had stolen some furs. A detective chased him, and fired several pistol shots at him, at the same time calling upon him to stop. One of the shots killed the man. The detective was tried for manslaughter and aquitted. Much was said upon the trial as to the right of a policeman to kill another who is escaping arrest. In this particular instance the detective had no warrant for the arrest of Gans and only pursued him because he had reason to suspect him of theft. We do not see that this makes any difference in the case. Counsel for the defendant contended that unless the right to shoot and, if necessary, to kill was not vested in policemen, there would be an end to the enforcement of law. Of course, such a view was vigorously combatted by the counsel for the Crown, and after the verdict was given the presiding judge very strongly advised policemen to be exceedingly careful in the use of firearms. The question involved in this case is a very delicate one. Gans had done nothing which the law makes punishable with death. Indeed, at the time it was not certain to any one but himself that he had done anything wrong. It is not a capital offence to steal furs, nor is it to run away from a policeman. Indeed, a desire to avoid arrest is a very natural thing. We recall a case of a man, who was arrested in a neighboring city, because the policeman thought he looked like a man who had committed an offence. When he was confronted with the injured party, the latter promptly said that he was not the offending person. Let it be supposed that the person arrested in this case had been hurrying along the street, instead of being seated in a hotel, as he was when arrested, and, conscious that he had done nothing for which he should be taken into custody, had paid no attention to shouted commands for somebody to stop, and the policeman had shot him, would it be a case of justifiable homicide? Most people will say it would not be, and yet in many parts of the United States a man runs the risk of being killed in that way whenever a policeman thinks he ought to be arrested. It is obvious that the police must be permitted on occasion to use firearms to enforce their authority and prevent the escape of criminals, but the principle that it is better that ten guilty men should escape than that one innocent man should suffer, or that some minor offender should go unpunished rather than that the extreme penalty of the law should be imposed and executed by a policeman, wherever he fancies it to be his duty, ought to be carefully observed.

INFLUX OF AMERICANS.

The fact that thousands of people from the United States are invading Canada in search of work is not the least significant of the changes which the "whirligig of time" has brought about. For a good many years we have been bewailing the "exodus"; now we find people expressing some concern about a movement into the country. Possibly this may prove to be a matter of very much greater importance than appears on the face of things. During the last three or four years a great many people have come into Canada from the United States to reside, and so for as the public knows all of them are satisfied with the change they have thus made. Some fear has been expressed that these people would employ what influence they possess in favor of the union of Canada with the republic, but one effect of a comparison between conditions in the two countries will undoubtedly be to convince them that the institutions of the Dominion are of such a character that it would be folly to alter them. These settlers on good farms, where they can raise splendid crops, and can find purchasers for them will congratulate themselves upon being free from the disturbing influences which are so seriously affecting their former homes.

The movement now going on is confined to laborers chiefly, but it is possible that it may be the forerunner of a large emigration from the United States to Canada of men who will desire to invest their means in a country enjoying the advantages possessed by the Dominion. If our country stands the present financial stringency without embarrassment, and the probabilities are all that it will, we may look with every confidence to a great appreciation of the esteem in which Canadian investments and Canadian opportunities for home-making are held by our neighbors.

The movement of events ought to impress one lesson upon the minds of the Canadian people. We all should unite in two things. One of them is the advancement of enterprises that will lead to the development of the country on broad lines, and the other is the removal of all taint of dishonesty from the administration of public affairs. No country ever had such an opportunity presented to it as Canada has today, and if we are wise we will devote our best energies and our best motives to taking advantage of it.

INDIAN RESERVES.

One of the resolutions adopted by the Conservative Convention at Vancouver calls for the readjustment of the Indian Reserves within this province. The reasons assigned for this are four. One of them is that the grants of the reserves, being for the exclusive use and benefit of the Indians, there was an express understanding that their area should correspond to the needs of the Indians, and be reduced as their number diminished. This statement is historically correct, as the records of the transaction very clearly show, and hence the provincial government has a good right in law to call upon the Dominion government to alter the size of the reserves, and the number of them, so as to make them conform to the changed conditions. The Indian Reserves in the Central Provinces were set apart by the Dominion government alone, the ownership of the land never having been vested in any provincial authority. Hence the Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta have no legal claim to have changes made. As has already been shown by the news columns of this paper, the Minister of the Interior proposes to reduce the area of the Reserves in that part of the Dominion. We question if there was any understanding with any one when they were set apart, that they might be reduced at any time. Nevertheless the Dominion government intends, and we admit rightly intends, to throw open for colonization such parts of them as the Indians do not really require. If this can be justified, a fortiori the reduction of the reservations in British Columbia can be justified; because it was a part of the original agreement that they should be reduced as occasion warranted. We can see no good reason why this contention should not be conceded at once by the Ottawa authorities. We can suggest an excuse for a refusal to do so. It may be said that in dealing with the reservations in the prairie country, the Dominion government is only retaking land which it formerly owned, while in the case of those of British Columbia it will be handing back to the province lands now controlled by the Department of the Interior; but this would be a very poor excuse, and a dishonest one, for it would be a gross breach of faith with British Columbia to refuse to carry out the intention of the original agreement between the province and the Dominion. Such a course on the part of the Ottawa government would be susceptible of only one explanation, and to this reference will be made later.

The second reason recited in the resolution is that the number of Indians in the province has diminished, and the third is that the location of some of the reservations is detrimental to the interests of the communities in which they are situated. The first proposition is easily established; the second is known to every one. All these reasons apply with special force to the Songhees Reserve. It is greater than the Indians can occupy for any beneficial purpose; the number of members of the tribe have been greatly reduced; its existence as a reserve is very detrimental to the city of Victoria.

The fourth reason for the proposed action is that the reservations are being used by the Dominion government in the interests of political favorites. There is unfortunately only too great a reason for saying this, as all who are familiar with the facts relating to the Tsimpsean Reserve and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway company know. In this case the Dominion government attempted to deprive the province of its reversionary rights in a large and potentially valuable area for the benefit of a company, which has already received many favors at its hands. The course taken in this case suggests a reason why that government might wish to retain the control of reserves within this province, even although the Indians, for whose benefit they are intended, have no further use for them.

We hope that the Ottawa Ministry will take a broader view of the case than appears to have animated it in the past. It will most certainly be given an opportunity to do so, for there can be no doubt that the provincial government will push its efforts for the adjustment of the question of the reserves all the more vigorously because of the strong ground taken by the Conservative Convention.

IS THERE A CRISIS?

Are the events now transpiring in the United States simply an incident in the current history of the nation, or do they indicate the existence of a crisis? There are some things which can hardly be disputed in this connection. There is in that country a degree of antagonism between what for want of a better term may be called capital and labor such as exists nowhere else in the world. There appears to be a wide-spread lack of confidence on the part of the people in the whole machinery of government. Almost every financial organization is under suspicion. The people are enraged against the transportation companies. The leaders in the busines world are regarded by the very great majority of people as the worst enemies of the state. These things may not constitute a crisis, but they combine to form something that might be mistaken for one. It has seemed evident to many observers that the conditions which have culminated in that country during the last four or five years would so profoundly affect the nation that something revolutionary only could bring order out of the chaos, which seemed to be imminent. The whole country went money-mad. The daily papers kept their readers excited over the stories of the fabulous fortunes which a small minority of the people were amassing. The weeklies and the magazines preached the doctrine of success, and the only success that seemed worth talking about was the getting of money. The development of good citizenship, the purification of public life, the maintenance of, in their integrity, the institutions of their country were hardly spoken of. The size of a man's "roll" was the measure of his success, and it mattered little how he got it. If he compelled public contractors to share their profits with him, taking good care in the first place to see that these profits were big enough to be worth dividing, if he got hold of a property for a small sum and by dint of misrepresentations sold it to the public for several times its value; if he bought judges so that they would decide causes in their favor; if he purchased state legislatures so as to secure senatorships and other things he wanted; all these things and many others were forgotten in the glamor of his success. Men who had the custody of millions paid in by the people for life insurance were gambling with it as though the money was their own; great commercial enterprises were openly violating the law. Occasionally the gates of prisons closed on some of the culprits, and on one remarkable occasion a huge fine was imposed upon a company; but these things served only to alarm the people, who believed that there must be much more undisclosed than had been exposed. During the last few weeks a vast quantity of gold has gone into the country from Europe, but there is very little indication of a restoration of confidence. Do these things indicate that a crisis is at hand, or will they pass away as other busines troubles have passed?

Every one will most earnestly hope that the difficulties will be overcome without any greater disturbance than has yet occurred. In the long run the people of the United States usually display their common sense, and we have every hope that they will do so now. But they have not always done so. They did not in respect to the slavery question, and every one knows the result. That was in one sense a local issue, that is the country divided geographically upon it, but the questions lying at the bottom of the unsettled conditions now existing cannot be assigned to one place more than to another. Yet, if serious trouble can be averted for a time, there is excellent reason that it can be averted altogether, for the hearts of the majority are right, and there is a fine reserve of national sanity and sense of responsibility. The great mass of the people, when everything is going well, pay little attention to how they are being governed; but they can be trusted to set things right when they know what has to be done. Therefore we are not as apprehensive of the future as we might otherwise be. We do not in any event anticipate financial collapse. This, we think, can be avoided, but we feel very sure that there is serious danger ahead for the republic if prompt steps are not taken to beget in the public mind greater confidence in the institutions of the country. It is not a financial crisis which may be expected, but a great social and national crisis. The Man on Horseback may not be as far off as most of us would like to believe he is.

Because he occupies such a very high position in the industrial world, and for the reason that he has unquestionably placed his finger on the greatest evil which afflicts mankind today, we direct special attention to the following paragraph, which is a portion of an interview with Colonel John Denny, of the famous shipbuilding firm, which appeared in the Colonist of yesterday: "People often ask why is there so much poverty in England? I believe that drink is responsible for nearly all of it. My wife runs an institution for providing shoes and stockings and underwear for indigent children. Usually the children are referred to her by the police who also look up the family history. In ninety per cent. of the cases one of the parents is a drunkard, and in sixty per cent. both of them are. We have very little distress among people who do not drink."

The newspapers of Great Britain are now displaying a great amount of interest in all Canadian affairs, due, no doubt, to the recent journalistic tours. In a recent issue, the Morning Post forecasts that Mr. Borden will be Prime Minister at an early date, and adds: His solid integrity of character more than compensates for his marked deficiency in demagogic skill. Picturesque figures like Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Mr. Parkes, Sir George Grey and Mr. Seddon belong to the infancy rather than the maturity of the British Empire. The political life of the Dominion must be preserved from the tyranny of the machine which has been perfected in the United States." Mr. Borden also seems, according to the Morning Post fitted to co-operate in carrying on the work of Imperial Unionism, based on full Colonial nationalism such as Premier Deakin enunciated at the Imperial Conference.

The saving grace of humor is not lacking in the laborers at Bedford, Ind., who, according to despatches of yesterday, on having their wages cut from 15 cents to 12½ cents per hour, promptly proceed to cut 2½ inches from the end of their shovels. The individual who was seized with such an inspiration is too clever a man to be engaged in digging a ditch.

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