

The Colonist.

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 1891.

MORE OBSTRUCTION.

We are quite at a loss to see what can possibly induce British Columbia newspapers to oppose almost with violence proposals which, if carried into effect, would be certain to benefit the people of the Province. The proposal to permit large flocks of sheep, intended for breeding purposes, to be imported into the Province, duty free, cannot, by any possibility, injure any one, except perhaps a very few, who have an interest in keeping up the prices of butchers' meat. If the sheep are permitted to be placed on ranches without paying the thirty per cent. duty, and if they increase and multiply as sheep always do when the conditions are favorable, the stock-raisers will be benefited and so will every consumer in the province. If the experiments fail, then the stock men will lose money, but no one else will be directly or indirectly injured.

The objection raised by a Westminster contemporary, that the comparatively small sum remitted to the importers by the Government must be made up by imposing or increasing taxes on other commodities, is too puerile to be more than noticed. The Government must be poor indeed, if it cannot afford to do without the few thousand dollars that the duty on the sheep would amount to. The Government, however, is not poor, it has quite a considerable surplus, and a small part of that surplus cannot be better expended than by encouraging an industry, which can hardly be said to be yet even in its infancy in British Columbia.

The Westminster Ledger accuses us of being inconsistent because we, being a supporter of the National Policy, favor taking the duty off a flock of sheep. There is no inconsistency about the matter. Under the National Policy many commodities are admitted free for the sake of encouraging native industry. Among them, if we don't mistake, are animals, imported for breeding purposes.

What better way can there be to foster and encourage a young industry than to permit the raw material which it uses, to be imported duty free?

The Colonist has gone further than to ask for a revision of duty on a few sheep. It has advocated the importation of machinery for mining purposes duty free, and this, too, for the very object for which the National Policy was established. For the same reason, the Colonist has opposed the increase of duty on the necessities of life, as such necessities may fairly be considered as being part of the raw material of all industries.

We did not think that there was any journalist, in Canada at any rate, so ignorant and so unreflecting as to believe that the National Policy requires heavy duties to be placed indiscriminately on all commodities produced in other countries, or that a remission of duties is not in many cases in perfect accordance with its principles. The admission of sheep for the purpose of stocking ranches is, in our opinion, one of the ways in which native industry in this Province can be fostered and stimulated, and therefore is in complete conformity with the policy of enlightened protection.

THE TART CASE.

The Opposition have passed their verdict on the McGreevey case before it has been tried. Mr. Tarte, who has the matter in hand, was afforded the opportunity of having the case investigated and decided upon by a court of law, but he availed himself of one of the loopholes of legal procedure to evade a judicial inquiry, preferring to have his charges considered and debated upon by Parliament.

The origin of this case, which has already become in some respects a cause célèbre, was a disagreement between Mr. Thomas McGreevey, one of the members for Quebec City in the House of Commons, and his brother Robert. Mr. Thomas McGreevey had been a contractor, and when he retired from that business he sold his plant to his brother Robert, to whom he also advanced considerable sums of money. Robert joined the firm of Larkin, Connolly & Co., contractors. He paid his brother at different times sums on account of the price of the plant and the borrowed money. There remained a very large amount due which Thomas McGreevey in course of time sued his brother for. Robert McGreevey, it appears, considered himself badly used and complained of the way in which Thomas had treated him.

The discomfited Robert found in Mr. Tarte, who has a newspaper at his command, a friend and sympathizer. The latter published in his paper a number of letters purporting to relate to different transactions in which Mr. Robert McGreevey had been engaged. In these letters Mr. Thomas McGreevey was accused of improperly using his position as a member of Parliament and a friend of the Minister of Public Works to favor the firm of which Robert McGreevey was a member. It is alleged that some of these letters are forgeries. Mr. Thomas McGreevey publicly denied the truth of these accusations, and he prosecuted Mr. Tarte for libel, but, as we have already said, did not come to a hearing. Mr. Tarte from his place in Parliament has repeated his charges against Mr. Thomas McGreevey, the whole matter has been referred to the committee on Privileges and Elections, which is composed of twenty-four Conservatives and eighteen Liberals. Sir Hector Langevin denies all knowledge of the corrupt transactions referred to by Mr. Tarte, and so have the officials of the Department of Public Works.

The charges relate to four separate contracts and extend over a period of some years, about eight years. The contracts in which it is asserted that the firm of Larkin, Connolly & Co. was unduly favored by the Department of Public Works through the agency of Mr. Thomas McGreevey were: The cross wall in the Louise basin; the Levis dry dock; the Esquimaux dry dock; and dredging in the Louise basin.

THE ESTIMATES.

The readers of the Colonist were no doubt surprised and disappointed to see how small a sum has been set down in the Dominion estimates for public works and improvements in Victoria. It can hardly be said that the Dominion Government is ignorant of Victoria's needs or of Victoria's claims to consideration. A great deal has been said and written during the past year about the shabbiness and inadequacy of the public buildings of the capital of British Columbia, and also about its importance as a commercial centre. Yet, in spite of all the representations that have been made by the press of this city, by its Board of Trade, by its leading citizens and representatives in Parliament, Victoria is treated as if it were an insignificant town in some out of the way county of Ontario or the Maritime Provinces.

The drill-shed, for which provision has been made in the Estimates, should have been built by this time. Six thousand dollars is utterly inadequate for the improvement of the harbor. To make the improvements that are urgently and immediately required a very much larger sum would be needed.

Victorians expected that not only would provision be made to render the harbor, inner and outer, fit to accommodate the rapidly increasing trade of the port, but that money would be appropriated for the erection of a custom house and a post-office commensurate with the wants of the province. But nothing of the kind has been done. We do not wonder that surprise and indignation are expressed by the supporters of the Government, and that the Opposition and those who sympathized with them are anxiously saying "We told you so."

We are not without hope, however, that the earnest representations and the vigorous protests of the representatives of this city will have the effect of causing the Government to give the case of Victoria their serious consideration. It seems to us certain that if they once realized the comparative importance of this city they would see how unjustly it has been treated hitherto, and that they would immediately take measures to give it what it is fairly entitled to in the way of public buildings and improvements. As we have already said more than once, Victoria does not sue for favors at the hands of the Dominion Government. All that it wants is fair play. If it is treated as other cities of its size and commercial importance in Eastern Canada are treated, its inhabitants will be quite satisfied. Let it have public buildings, such as have been given to Quebec, Ottawa, Hamilton, London, or even Winnipeg, and there will be no complaint from Victorians. It should not be forgotten that each of the cities we have mentioned, except Quebec, contributes less to the general revenue than Victoria. The difference between Quebec and Victoria is only a few dollars. Here are the figures:

Quebec.....\$69,491
Ottawa.....348,582
Hamilton.....77,623
London.....94,675
Winnipeg.....66,332
Victoria.....789,185

Let the Ministers compare what has been expended on public buildings in these cities with what has been spent upon buildings of a corresponding nature in Victoria, and they will be surprised to see how this city has been neglected.

WIDE DIFFERENCES.

We see that some American newspapers are beginning to boast that the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia is modelled after that of the American Republic. These papers have not, it is evident, studied the Australian draft constitution at all carefully. If they did, they would see that it differs from that of the United States in many very important particulars. In the first place, the Australian head of the Executive is not to be elected. This, of itself, makes a very great difference between the two constitutions. Take from the American policy presidential elections every four years, presidential vetoes, presidential powers of appointment, and an irresponsible cabinet, and it would be so changed that its oldest friends would not know it. The change, we think, would be for the better, but there are very few Americans who believe this, and those who do are too prudent to make the admission. The Australian Constitution will have an Executive Head who can do no wrong, and who will be obliged to follow the advice of his constitutional advisers. He will be appointed by the Home Government, and he will represent the Sovereign. His advisers must enjoy the confidence of a majority of the representatives of the people. Whenever Parliament shows by its votes that the majority of its members do not approve of their policy, out they go. They will not be able, like the President of the United States and his cabinet, to hold on to office after the people have, by a two-thirds vote, declared that they do not approve of the policy of the Administration. In Australia, the people will be really sovereign all the time, not merely once in four years.

There are other differences between the two constitutions which are calculated to make the systems of government under them widely different. The Australian constitution, it seems to us, is like that of the Dominion of Canada—the British constitution modified to suit the conditions and circumstances of a new country.

THE BOER RAID.

The South African Boer promises to be troublesome again. He wants to get possession of the goodly land that lies between him and the sea. A band of filibusters has, it appears, set out of Mafekingland. The men are well armed, and it is known that they are good fighters. But they will be opposed this time by a man of energy and great ability. Mr. Rhodes knows his own mind. There is no shilly-shally about him. When he makes up his mind to oppose the Boers and to prevent their taking possession of land on which his Company have obtained privileges he will not let the grass grow under his feet. He will act promptly, and he will stimulate to effective action those who co-operate with him and are brought under his influence. Lord Salisbury, too, is a man who, when he once takes a matter in hand, will go through with it. He will not allow precious time to be wasted in useless negotiations. The officer whom he sends to Africa will have orders to act with promptitude and decision. When the Boers find that they have men to deal with who are not to be trifled with, they will hesitate before they begin a contest in which they will be sure in the long run to come out losers. We are not in the habit of prophesying, but in the matter of the Boer invasion of Mafekingland we feel very much like predicting that there will be no war, but that the Boers will back out when they find that the British Government and the President of the South African Association mean business.

THE BRITISH BUDGET.

Temperance men must have been discouraged at the revelations made by Mr. Goschen in his Budget Speech. From them it must be concluded that the temperance movement has not done so much for the people of the Three Kingdoms as might be expected. The truth seems to be that when the inhabitants of the British Islands have money in his pocket he must spend some of it in strong drink. It is only when times are very hard and money not to be had, even for necessities, that he is perfect abstemious. The Budgets of Chancellors of the Exchequer show that the better times are in Great Britain, the more strong drink is consumed. Times in that country, last year, did not appear from this side of the Atlantic to have been strong drink was \$4,500,000 greater than it was the year before. We have not the means of finding out whether the consumption of tea, coffee and sugar was increased correspondingly, but we venture to say that it was not. At any rate, nothing is said about the increased consumption of these commodities, except tea, in the comments on the Budget that we have seen. But something is, however, said about the increase of the revenue on tobacco, which amounted to somewhere about \$2,280,000. Some one has calculated the increased consumption of tobacco to amount to five hundred and sixty millions of pipes, counting twelve pipes to the ounce. It is evident that John Bull's love for his pipe and his glass has not been greatly lessened of late years. They are still necessary to his enjoyment, if not to his comfort.

A striking feature of this year's British Budget is the provision made for free education. The good old-fashioned British Tory regarded free education with a dislike which he took no pains to conceal. He held that every one should be educated according to his station in life, and that it was no kindness to the son of the laborer or mechanic to educate him in such a way as to give him ideas and tastes unsuited to the position he would have to occupy in the world. He would have every child get just as much schooling as would fit him to do his duty in that state of life in which he had pleased God to call him, and no more—here, of course, being the judge of that station. As for free education, he considered it just as reasonable to require the state to give children free food and free clothes, as to give them free schooling. He believed that making education general was one of the things that was turning the world upside down and destroying men's reverence both for the wisdom and the institutions of their ancestors, to say nothing of their religion.

But the Tory of to-day is not like the Tory of half, or even a quarter, of a century ago. He finds, as the Primrose League magazine said the other day, that he must "move with the times." One of the movements of the times is public education, paid for by the state. Whether the results of such education are bad or good, hurtful or wholesome, the people must have it, and if the Conservatives will not give it to them they will get it from the Radicals. The movement will continue, and as there is no use trying to stop it, the fine old moss-backs might as well put up with it as not, and try to keep pace with the times.

It must have been reasoning such as this that has prevailed upon a section of the Tory party to consent to making free education a part of the policy of the Unionist Government. Mr. Goschen has set apart \$10,000,000 to carry out the Government's free education scheme. As it cannot be put into operation before September, only \$5,000,000 will be required for the purpose from next year's revenue. It is intended to do away with school fees altogether in the primary schools. The schools are, it appears, to remain in all other respects as they are now. Education in Great Britain is not to be made secular. This is not advocated except by extreme Radicals. Neither members of the Established church, nor non-conformists, nor Catholics, will consent to conform to the banishment from the schools. Public opinion in Great Britain, according to the indications visible to us, is strongly opposed to secular common school education. Whether making schools free is a step in that direction time alone can tell. On this side of the Atlantic it is found impossible to have the religion of any denomination taught in schools which are maintained by the taxes paid by all. We are not at all sure that the success of the secular system in America has been such as will dispose the people of Great Britain to make their public schools "godless." Making their common schools free may be considered by many a step in that direction, and when people once commence to move with the times it is hard to tell where they will stop. There are people in Great Britain who say that the adoption of free education is a concession to the Radical Unionists, and that the approach of the general election has rendered it necessary. We are inclined to believe that this extension of free education to the people of Great Britain is not a mere party move, but that it has been made with the sincere intention of improving and elevating the mass of the British people.

POLITICAL CLERGYMEN.

In his speech at the annual grand banquet of the Primrose League, Lord Salisbury spoke at some length of the interference of clergymen in political contests. He spoke delicately but firmly on this very tender subject. From what he said it is perfectly clear that the British Premier is of opinion that politicians can manage the affairs of state without the direct interference of clergymen. Alluding to the part taken by Roman Catholic priests in recent Irish elections, he said—

"Well, there is one other revelation that the last five years has produced, and it is one that I wish to speak on with great caution and reserve, because it touches however indirectly, on the sacred question of religion. In this Primrose League we gladly accept the cooperation of all who wish to maintain the acknowledgment of religion in this land. But, by religion, we mean that which points at and teaches the lesson of holy things and brings a voice from the world beyond. We do not mean controversies by which the preachers of religion may have a larger share of secular success."

It may be gathered from this that, in Lord Salisbury's opinion, clergymen ought to influence men in politics, as they do in business, by instilling such principles as will cause them to do what is right and fair. A business man does not require a clergyman to be a his elbow all the time to tell him what is honest and what is dishonest, what is just and what is unjust, what to associate with and whom to avoid. It is expected that the effects of religious teaching will be such that men will feel it unconsciously in every act of their lives, and be influenced by it for good. That it will be the heaven that leaveneth the whole lump, though it requires the most minute examination to detect its existence in the particles of which it is composed. In the same way, if a man possesses sound principle, and a properly educated conscience, he will not require any special guidance from clergymen in the exercise of his duties as a citizen. In matters that are purely political, the average clergyman is quite as apt to be wrong as the voter who possesses ordinary intelligence. The reason of this is plain. Clergymen, as a rule, take but little interest in politics, and their occupations and habits of thought are not calculated to qualify them to be good advisers in matters that are merely secular and political. The intelligent layman, on the other hand, can hardly help being, to a greater or less extent, a student of the politics of his own and other countries. He reads about politics, he talks about politics, and he is obliged to take part in political contests. In a free country, politics are the chief means of the education of the adult citizen. The consequence is that voters are a rule consider that they are quite as competent to exercise their franchise intelligently and for the public good as are the men to whose judgment on matters spiritual they are ready cheerfully to defer.

This, it seems to us, is the reason why electors of all denominations generally consider the clergyman who takes an active part in politics as being out of place, and why the phrase "political parson" is, among English speaking people, at any rate, regarded as conveying a certain degree of reproach. We think, too, it will be found that political parsons are not, as a general thing, successful as clergymen.

How far a clergyman should interfere in political contests is a delicate question on which there are many opinions, some of them most unreasonable and intolerant. Lord Salisbury indicates in the following passage pretty clearly where they should not interfere, and he takes good care that his strictures are as applicable to clergymen of all denominations. He said—

"Do not let me for a moment be supposed to speak indignantly of their action (the Irish priests) because they are Roman Catholics. This is far from my intention. My intention is to warn you of the danger, and earnestly ask you to be alive to it, if the ministers of any religion shall make the influence that religion confers upon them a means of figuring in the light of political leaders (cheers). I have great reverence for the laws and order of an Archbishop, but when I see behind the crozier the familiar features of Mr. Schnodhorst my reverence disappears (laughter). Do not suppose that I would not feel the same thing with respect to other religions. We have cause to complain of it at this moment among the members of my department (Wales (hear hear)), when religion is made the screen for secular agitation. We have some cause to complain of it, I think, among the Free Churchmen of the north of Scotland. But if it happened in the church to which I myself belong, I should be equally keen to denounce it. (Cheers.) Can you imagine the Archbishop of Canterbury summoning his suffragans and resolving that there should be a change in the leadership of the Conservative party. (Laughter.) I might naturally demur to such an exercise of influence, but my impression is that I should not be alone in my demur, and that the Church of England and all who belong to the Church of England would reject with the utmost indignation any such intrusion of the sacred ecclesiastical element."

No doubt the laity of the Church of England would refuse to submit to the intrusion of ecclesiasticalism into politics. But there is no fear of that coming to pass. And though the day for wholesale clerical interference in the politics of Great Britain is past, there may be a good deal of irritating and hurtful intermeddling in political contests here and elsewhere by individual ministers of religion.

A FIELD FOR ENTERPRISE.

From what Dr. Hendryx and others say of the resources of the Kootenay country, it is but reasonable to conclude that there will, before very long, be a large and constantly increasing population in that rich region. It can already, thanks to the enterprise of steamboat and railway companies, be easily reached, and the means of communication with it are likely to be greatly increased in the near future. It is not, therefore, time that the merchants of Victoria were taking measures to secure a fair share of the trade of that promising part of the province. A hundred indications show that it will be a rich field for the enterprise of merchants and others engaged in trade. It is well known that those who are first in the field secure many advantages that cannot be obtained by their successors. There is nothing to hinder Victoria from reaping many and great advantages from the development of the Kootenay district. The Americans are nearer, certainly, and they are quick to see, and prompt to take advantage of, any new trade opening. But Victoria merchants have the tariff in their favor, and they have also the good-will of the pioneer settlers. This city has, in many ways, favored the settlement and the development of Kootenay, and its inhabitants appreciate the help and the encouragement that they have received from the citizens of Victoria and from its press. This predilection in their favor may, if it is taken advantage of in time, of great service to the Victorians who determine to aid in the development of the commercial resources of the district. There is, therefore, no reason, that we can see, that Kootenay may not be made cheerfully to contribute to the progress and prosperity of Victoria. All that enterprising Victorians need do is to avail themselves in time of the many opportunities that Kootenay holds out to them. There is a good opening here. Let our shrewd and far-seeing men of business enter and take possession.

A THOROUGH ENQUIRY.

There appears to be every disposition on the part of the Government and its supporters to give Mr. Tarte all the opportunities he could desire to make good his charges against the Hon. Mr. McGreevey and the Department of Public Works. No attempt is being made to screen anyone. The investigation of the Committee on Privileges and Elections is certain to be thorough. The opponents of the Government who are on that committee have a free hand. They can call for what documents and books they may consider necessary, and they may summon what witnesses they require. If all stories are true, then all Conservatives who are a little more eager to blacken the characters and to ruin the careers of the men said to be implicated than the most partisan Grits to be found in the Opposition ranks. The country, therefore, may rest assured that due weight will be given to every particle of evidence calculated to fasten the guilt on the persons accused. Nothing has, at yet, transpired to throw light on the case. It was generally believed that when Mr. Tarte formally preferred his charges in Parliament, new matter would be introduced which would add to their gravity and make them more easily substantiated. But this was not the case. All his accusations had been made before, and they had all been discussed in the newspapers. The Hon. Mr. McGreevey denied, last year, that there was any truth in them, which denied he repeated in Parliament directly after Mr. Tarte had read his bill of indictment. Sir Hector Langevin also denied, as far as he was concerned, that there was any truth in them. He read his denial, which we reproduce as it appears in the columns of the Toronto Empire. This is it—

"I state from my place in Parliament that if never communicated in any way to any one tenders, or prices of tenders, or relative position of tenders, or names of tenders, at any time before the contract was allotted and signed, and the work in progress, the only person having the same information being the members of the Privy Council and such of the officers of my department as were entrusted with the opening of tenders after the period fixed for the receipt of tenders. I have no recollection of any such or other officers of my department being guilty of any indiscretion or breach of trust in connection with any tender or contract. Tenders accepted have been, and are, so accepted strictly according to law. If the parties mentioned in the motion as having contributed to a testimonial presented to me some eight or ten years ago have so contributed to it I never asked them to do so, and up to this moment I never knew them to have done so. Directly or indirectly I never asked the contractors named in the motion for money, cheques or notes, nor did I receive any such cheques or notes from them for my use, profit or advantage. I have no recollection of any such or other officers of my department being guilty of any indiscretion or breach of trust in connection with any tender or contract. Tenders accepted have been, and are, so accepted strictly according to law. If the parties mentioned in the motion as having contributed to a testimonial presented to me some eight or ten years ago have so contributed to it I never asked them to do so, and up to this moment I never knew them to have done so. Directly or indirectly I never asked the contractors named in the motion for money, cheques or notes, nor did I receive any such cheques or notes from them for my use, profit or advantage. 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