

PATRIOTIC BOMBAST.

We believe the fact is set down somewhere in contrasting black and white that patriotism is the last refuge of a certain class of persons. It will have been noticed that at the first political meeting of the provincial election campaign held the other evening at A. O. U. W. hall Premier McBride and several of his more prominent supporters waved the old flag with a great deal of energy. The sentiments expressed were flamboyantly loyal and patriotic. "We must approach this question as loyal Britons," says the Premier. Why was it necessary to introduce such a sentence as that in a speech explaining what had been done at the inter-provincial conference at Ottawa? Does Premier McBride think that there is any danger of the people of British Columbia losing their heads or their senses over this movement for better terms of which he has apparently deceived himself into the belief, or is perhaps trying to delude the public into the belief, that he is the leader? Is he fearful lest there may be an insurrection against the authority of the Dominion and that a cry may go up for "better terms or separation?" As a matter of fact Premier McBride is giving but little attention to any of what he considers the side issues which have arisen out of the conference of the provincial premiers. He had one object in view when he went to Ottawa. We pointed out when he was on his way that he had gone to raise a political issue. His course all along indicated with absolute exactness what he was striving for. He played according to programme in the East, and when he came back West he proceeded to the second act of the farce. We shall have the curtain rising on the final act one of these days when the country is least expecting it, and a strong attempt will be made to cover up all the nasty details of the McBride administration's career under the old flag.

We have said that the Premier's address on his return from the conference at Ottawa was essentially that of a demagogue. It was a sinister appeal to sectional prejudice, and while we do not believe for a moment that the people of British Columbia can be incited to hostility against their neighbors in the East by the vapors of a shallow politician whose goal is office at any price—to whom indeed office is essential—the man who is so utterly lost to the sense of patriotism in its true sense as to insinuate that British Columbia has been wronged by the federal government, who asserts that justice has been done, and that we must appeal to the Mother Land to have the crooked things set straight, is a dangerous character, should be regarded as such and treated accordingly by true patriots.

When Premier McBride, or any of his sincere supporters, talks of appealing the case of British Columbia to the foot of the Throne he knows he is speaking with the mouth of a demagogue. He has no intention of taking an appeal to any other tribunal than the people of British Columbia, whom he hopes to deceive by hysterical rantings about patriotism and by bombastic references to the old flag. If he were to go to Westminster he would be referred inconspicuously to Ottawa. If by a stretch of the imagination the Colonial Secretary can be conceived as asking for particulars as to the reasons for the provisions of the terms of union have been broken, what reply could the provincial delegate make? Would he not be compelled to acknowledge that the provision of the terms of union have been interpreted liberally? If he were honest and candid would not sincerely force him to admit that a portion of the customs duties—the head tax on Chinese—to which British Columbia had no legal claim, had been turned over to the provincial treasury? Is it conceivable that any Premier would seriously think of going to the "foot of the throne" with such a case, even if the Mother Country, the "fountain of justice" to the peculiar type of patriots who flourish exceedingly in this province under the aegis of McBrideism, were in the habit of interfering in the domestic affairs of self-governing portions of the Empire such as Canada. Suppose there were to be a change of government at Ottawa at any time during the career of the McBride government, what chance would there be of this province receiving more sympathetic consideration from a Conservative government than it has received from the assembled provincial premiers and the present Liberal administration? We are told by leading Conservative journals that Premier Whitney of Ontario, a Conservative, was the most prominent figure in every respect at that conference. He is the right-hand man of Mr. Borden. Ontario is the hope of Toryism. It is the one province in which the ancient but somewhat decayed political faith has particular status at the present stage of the political history of the world. It was Premier Whitney who practically held that to talk of arbitration was absurd and who moved the resolution calling for the payment of an extra million dollars to British Columbia in recognition of the peculiar circumstances of her case. Doubtless Mr. Whitney thought his proposition was a very handsome one or he would scarcely have used the expression he did regarding Mr. McBride. We know indeed that the representatives of the other provinces all thought they were acting in an exceedingly generous spirit towards us. We take a different view here, naturally. And yet we must

not forget that we are partners in the confederation compact; that our voice is but one in nine. In spite of the airy manner in which any references to the sentiments of the other provinces are waved aside by speakers and writers who are under no more responsibility, comparatively, than the insects of the day, the attitude of the East must be taken into consideration. No public man will assume the responsibility of raising feelings of antagonism in the portions of the Dominion which are still politically dominant.

Therefore, as an appeal to the foot of the throne and the waving of the old flag are all humbug, as Mr. McBride has himself acknowledged that Finance Minister Fielding actually did offer better terms than the million dollar proposal of Premier Whitney, as the offer of the Finance Minister was not an ultimatum, we hold that our representative should not have gone sulking into his tent and refused to discuss the matter further. He should have listened to all Mr. Fielding had to say—and this he would have done had he not been alarmed lest peradventure he might have been forced to abandon the cry that had been determined upon before he left for Ottawa—the appeal that it is hoped will divert attention from the various unsavory transactions which have brought contempt upon British Columbia during the past three years.

THE PREMIER'S RETURN.

The Times was pleased indeed to join in the welcome home given Premier McBride Friday night, was delighted to observe that notwithstanding the trying time the honorable gentleman must have had in keeping his feet out of the traps the Right Honorable Sir Wilfrid Laurier set in the hope of catching him when he wasn't watching out, that despite the mean things his friend Hon. J. P. Whitney had said of him, that after the laborious time he had at Ottawa in fighting for the rights of British Columbia, the Premier was looking very well indeed and in fine fettle for the general election of which the grand procession on Friday may be said to have been a premonitory symptom.

Of course it may be that the hearty welcome Mr. McBride received may have something to do with the cheerfulness of his demeanor. There were no less than five crowded carriages in the procession, which was preceded by a band and an enthusiastic company of small boys carrying torches. If that was not sufficient to encourage the heart of the Premier after the disappointing results of numerous attempts to get up "enthusiastic, spontaneous receptions" at various points on the mainland, and notably at Vancouver, his principal organ must have been very depressed indeed.

And then the hall in which the preliminary meeting of the campaign was held was well filled. The audience was enthusiastic. The atmosphere it breathed was inspiring, if not actually inspiring. The address of welcome was read with emphasis, at some points with an intonation that approached the point of vehemence, perhaps as an intimation to the responsive audience that the time had come to cheer. On the whole all the elements may be said to have combined to arouse the blood and inspire the brain of such an ardent campaigner as the Premier to a masterly effort. But it may be said with perfect truth that the first speech of the campaign was a disappointment to those Conservatives who listened with what patience they could to its termination. There is a notable change in the forensic style of the Premier. He has evidently been a student of style during his absence, and it is quite possible he will admit that he has learned something from the small men with whom he has been so stubbornly fighting at the Dominion capital. At the same time it must be confessed that Mr. McBride made the most of the material at his disposal. He was neither frank nor candid in his references to the proceedings of the conference of provincial premiers. He sought to convey the impression that the resolution of his friend the Conservative Premier of Ontario contained all it was proposed to concede to British Columbia in the way of better terms, while all the other provinces had been provided for in a correspondingly generous fashion. He quite overlooked the hundred and fifteen thousand dollars per annum which was British Columbia's share under the revised schedule and failed to mention the fact that it was proposed to place all the provinces upon an equal footing in respect to the per capita allowances.

In a word, the speech of the premier was a characteristically Tory deliverance. It was a studied attempt to arouse sectional prejudice. It was intended to engender the belief in the minds of the unthinking that British Columbia has been discriminated against in the interpretation of the terms of the British North America Act. This Premier posed as the hero who has been ordained to deliver us from the thralldom of the East. He is going to set us free if he has to go to the foot of the throne to do it.

But in the meantime he must be given a new lease of power. He must feel, and the Eastern marauders must be taught, that the majority of the people of British Columbia are behind him. And the majority of the people of British Columbia, we believe, know the character of the man who is at the head of affairs in this province well.

enough—of the men who bestowed a townsite of fabulous value upon a few of its male and female friends and who endowed a railway corporation which had not a shadow of claim with eight hundred thousand acres of valuable land—we say the majority of the people ought to have their eyes opened by this time and doubtless know that if Premier McBride is returned on a purely sectional issue they will hear but little more of "better terms"—that is, not until the question can again be put to profitable party account.

A COMMENDABLE MOVE.

We do not know whether the space in the Victoria exhibition grounds is sufficient for the ordinary purposes of our agricultural show. Even if it is sufficient at the present time, as the population surrounding the city is constantly increasing and our industries expanding, it is evident that it cannot be long until more land will be required. But there is another point of even greater importance from the point of view of the people who are interested in the maintenance and the progress of the exhibition. It has been demonstrated that horse races are the chief attraction of the show. It may not be to our credit as a community that such is the case; but it is an incontrovertible fact. And we are not a solitary people in respect of this weakness of character. What is true of Victoria is true of every city in which an annual fair is held. The public at large, while it will submit to a certain amount of instruction in season, will insist upon being amused at all seasons. The majority of those who attend the Victoria Exhibition go on the days of the races or of other "special features." The horse races are the chief attraction. Now the demand for property in the immediate neighborhood of Victoria is steadily increasing. Large farms are being divided up and are being disposed of at prices far in excess of what would have seemed possible a year or so ago. The value of small holdings has been demonstrated by the possibilities of fruit growing. There was a danger of the race course, commonly known as Bowker Park, passing into the hands of people having in view its value as agricultural or horticultural land. The exhibition authorities were apprised of this and given an opportunity to obtain an option on the property. They availed themselves of the chance. Now it will remain for the people to endorse their action and to provide funds for the completion of the transaction. We understand that when everything is taken into consideration, including the rent the association has been paying for the use of the grounds, the agricultural association and the ratepayers will be in pocket if the property be purchased at the price mentioned—forty thousand dollars. The permanent extension of the exhibition grounds will therefore involve no additional charges upon the public. Even if it did mean a slightly added liability, the exhibition must be maintained; it must advance if it is to succeed; and it cannot be expected to achieve success if suitable provision be not made for the improvements that become necessary from year to year.

The Grand Trunk people are going in for transportation by sea as well as by land. And they are going to enjoy the important advantage of having everything new and thoroughly up-to-date. That will put them at once on a level with the strongest of their competitors on the two oceans. But there will be enough trade doing for all, and some to spare. We Canadians think we have been making fairly satisfactory progress for the past half dozen years; we haven't got properly under way yet.