THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT.

Hon. Mr. Sifton has displeased some of our Conservative friends by undertaking to reorganize the department of the interior. They loudly assert that he is but carrying out the obnoxious "spoils system," and that he is dismissing or superannuating old and tried officers merely for the purpose of employing favorites of his own. There is neither reason nor honesty in the cry. No person who knows anything of the history of the interior department can honestly say that in the past its business has been conducted on proper lines. It has been notoriously a refuge for political hacks and hangers-on, men who had nothing but political service to commend them. The result has naturally been an inefficient service, accompanied by many evils which a business administration could not have endured. Mr. Sifton has done well in stirring up the dry bones in his department, and no one can properly find fault if he has succeeded in improving his staff and at the same time effected an economy. The Globe commends Mr. Sifton's course in the following remarks, which are pretty sure to be endorsed by the country at large: "It is gratifying that Mr. Sifton has had the courage to do his duty to the public, although that duty entailed the disagreeable task of dismissing unnecessary employees and removing several who were not suited to their positions. Those who see little or nothing in public administration except the providing of salaries or situations for friends and supporters raise the cry of the 'spoils system,' and claim that the reorganization has been effected to provide places for Liberals. A scrutiny of the changes made effectually disposes of such a charge. Every one was absolutely necessary to the efficient and economic administration of departmental affairs. Superfluous employees have been dismissed, and no one has been retained whose services could not return adequate value to the people. Necessary employees in positions suited to their capacity have not been disturbed. In all other cases Mr. Sifton has taken the widest liberty, and if he had failed to do so he would not have discharged his full duty to the taxpayers. His course must be judged by its results. In that regard he is responsible to the people. If he gives efficient service for the expenditure on his department he must be adjudged worthy of support."

SURFACE RIGHTS.

In some cases confusion has arisen in regard to land titles founded on rights to mineral claims. A few years ago, when the mineral right carried with it surface rights, there was no trouble, but since the change ordered by the legislature there has been plenty of chance for the raising of disputes, especially where townsites are involved. Those who have recently undertaken "jumping" projects on the strength of what they were told was a court judgment were undoubtedly laboring under a mistake, but cases may arise where innocent purchasers of townsite lots will lose their money through want of a title. If the holders of mineral claims are not to be allowed to secure the surface rights, then they should not be allowed to register and sell them as townsites. Even in that event there would still be a chance for confusion, since the holder of the mineral claim can use the surface for mining purposes. The Nelson Tribune offers the following in connection with this matter, which we are heartily free to approve: "Assurances come from Victoria that the government during the present session will pass legislation with a view to straightening out the tangle in which surface rights have become involved throughout the mining districts by the reservation of the surface of mineral claims by the government. It is quite likely that the government will make an amendment to the Mineral Act by which the owners of all the claims may acquire the surface rights to their claims upon the payment of $5 per acre. The government by this means will receive the price of first-class land for the area covered by the claims. It will not work any hardships upon mine owners, since if a mining claim has any value, $250 per claim for surface rights would not cut much of a figure. Such legislation would also tend to clear up many disputes as to title throughout Kootenay. It does not follow that the government would compel mine owners to purchase more of the surface than they required, but even from the sale of such surface areas as are or are likely to come into dispute the government by this means would receive a substantial revenue, and titles would be cleared to valuable townsite lands."

Western Mining World: There is no danger of an exhaustion of the gold fields of the earth. The world's yearly production of gold is now about $210,000,000, double the aggregate produced seven years ago and greater than that produced in any other year in the whole world's history. Prior to last year's vast output of gold the greatest product was in the year of 1853, when the river gravels of California and Australia were yielding their richest stores of the yellow metal.

An exchange observes: "A woman was the only applicant who could pass a recent civil service examination for a clerkship in the adjutant-general's office in Washington. Besides a knowledge of typewriting and French, German, Spanish and Italian, the clerk had to know how to read proof and prepare manuscript for the press as well as to index and catalogue books and documents, and likewise to be well up in military history and the technical terms of military service, and a girl was the only one who knew all this. The fact seems to show that, while college boys are away on sporting tours, playing baseball, football, cricket, and other athletic games and training for oarsmen, the girls are quietly getting in their work at school and stealing away the laurels for scholarship."

Halifax Chronicle: "Some time ago the Indiana legislature received a bill which proposed to change the ratio that has existed between the diameter and the circumference of a circle from 3.1416 to 3.2. It was represented that this change was to be made in the interest of facilitating mathematical calculations, which have always been more or less complicated by the use of the long decimal and the plus sign. The senate was about to change the ratio fixed by the Creator when "the point was raised that the legislature had no power to declare a truth," and a circle will continue to be a circle in Indiana. And yet the Indiana idea was quite as sensible as that of the protectionist theorists who undertake, by means of fearful and wonderful tariff inventions, to hinder interchange of products between the different countries of the world, and divert trade and industry into artificial channels, as if they could improve upon the natural laws which the Creator has stamped upon the works of his hands.

BONAVENTURE ELECTION.

The election of Mr. Guite, the Liberal candidate in Bonaventure, is a very significant occurrence. In the telegraphic reports there have been set forth the strenuous efforts made by some of the bishops to defeat the government candidate and secure a condemnation of the Manitoba school settlement. Mr. Guite was even commanded to sign a pledge that in the event of his election he would vote against this settlement and that he would "forbid all those who should represent him in the electoral campaign, either on the hustings or in their private conversation with the electors, to speak one single word in favor of the Laurier-Greenway settlement, or of giving it a trial, because the same has not been accepted by the religious authority." It was threatened that if this pledge was not signed Mr. Guite and his supporters would be denounced by a mandement to be read in the churches. Mr. Guite refused to sign, taking a firm stand in defence of electoral freedom. The threat of denunciation does not seem to have been carried out, but the bishops did all they could to secure the defeat of Mr. Guite, and his election by a large majority must be a severe blow to them. By their efforts to keep the school controversy alive they bid fair to injure themselves and their church as well as do lasting damage to the country in general.

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S CONTRIBUTIONS.

The efforts of Mr. Turner to obtain information from the business men of the province, upon which he expects to base a railway policy, or a "better terms" cry, will not be wholly successful, since many merchants will refuse to place particulars about their private business in the hands of the government. Nevertheless sufficient data will be collected to establish, with approximate accuracy, the fact which the statistician has set out to prove, viz., that the direct contribution of British Columbia to the Dominion government, and the indirect contribution to the Dominion manufacturers through the operation of the tariff, are together very largely in excess of the amounts received for all purposes from the Dominion. Every person who has looked into the subject knows this to be the fact. The Liberal candidates at the two elections in this city in 1896 tried to hammer that truth into the minds of the people, but met with only partial success. Col. Prior, the Colonist, individual members of the provincial government, and Conservative politicians generally, would not admit that there was any force in the contention. But the scene has changed since that time, and the object of the circular and schedule which are being sent out to merchants and others, as the provincial statistician states, "is quite apparent."

The provincial government desires to know the amount of money paid by British Columbia consumers to eastern manufacturers, as a consequence of the higher prices charged for Canadian goods under the protective tariff. Adding to that the sums contributed through the customs, inland revenue, and the various services of the Dominion, it will be found that there is a grand total in excess of several million dollars of the Dominion grants for all purposes in the province. Upon this information, when properly authenticated, the provincial government evidently propose making a demand either for larger Dominion expenditure or a reduction in taxation, it is not very clear which. But as the provincial ministers were supporters of the high tariff is is scarcely likely that they will ask for a reduction of the customs duties; that would be a right thing to do, but it would not be consistent with their past policy or the principles of the party they so long supported. The result of the inquiry is more likely to be a request for Dominion aid to railway construction. Mr. Turner is at present wrestling with a railway policy, which he has promised to submit to the legislature during the present session, and there is imminent danger that the policy will throw the politician if the latter is not supported and strengthened by the statistician.

The position of the government in this matter is a novel one, still we wish them success in their efforts to make out a case against past Dominion neglect and the ruinous effects of the N. P. in British Columbia. If they have had their eyes opened to the ruinous effects of the policy that has so long prevailed, no one ought to rejoice more than those who, like the Times, have been for years opposing the Conservative administrations, which are largely responsible for financial distress prevailing in many portions of the province. A new government is in power at Ottawa and a new policy is being inaugurated. The data which Mr. Turner's is collaborating—it is immaterial whether the real object is to help the provincial government out of its present difficulties—will be of great value to Mr. Laurier, as it will enable him to defend, and successfully, too, let us all hope, the policy of developing the west, and British Columbia in particular, upon which the government entered with spirit and determination immediately on attaining to power.

LEGISLATIVE NOTES.

Both the leader of the opposition and Dr. Walkem called attention to this clause of the Lunacy Act: "If a patient has been admitted as a free patient to any asylum, and it is afterwards discovered that the patient has a father, mother, husband, wife, guardian, committee, or other person legally or morally liable to pay for such patient's maintenance, the medical superintendent shall at once render an account to the person so liable for the maintenance and clothing of the patient, from the date of his admission into such asylum; and such person or persons shall be notified that the patient will be made a private patient, and that he or they must provide a bond in the form M in the schedule to this act, for the further maintenance of the patient in the asylum; and if such person or persons refuse to execute the required bond, or to provide for the maintenance of the patient in the asylum, that the patient will be discharged and sent home to his relative or friends." Dr. Walkem very properly characterized the clause as a very undignified threat to insert in a public act. Surely the provincial secretary does not intend to turn dangerous lunatics loose because their friends refuse to pay for their maintenance.

The name of Warburton Pike is the only one which appears in the act incorporating the Cassiar Central Railway Co., and the railway committee has dubbed the line the "one man's railway." Usually there are at least half a dozen incorporators mentioned in private acts. Mr. Cotton in committee yesterday pointed out a peculiarity in Mr. Pike's bill. While that gentleman was the only incorporator the bill makes it impossible to transact business without there being three directors present. Mr. Pike will find it necessary to get some others into his company before his act will be of any value to him.

The house has at last got down to work and good progress is being made. The most hopeful members, however, do not believe prorogation will take place until the middle of May.

The druggists of the city advanced rather strong arguments in their petition against the bill to amend the Pharmacy Act. It would be impossible to remove manufactured poisons from the boxes or bottles in which they arrive from the manufacturers and place them in rough bottles. Mr. Kennedy, who introduced the bill, not being a druggist, can be excused for not taking this matter into consideration.

Mr. Graham gives notice that he intends to introduce a bill to amend the Game Act. As a session of the legislature cannot pass without the Game Act being tinkered, the province is to be congratulated that the chief tinker is to be so sensible a legislator as Mr. Graham.

Mr. Sword's suggestion that railway companies should put up some deposit as an earnest of their intention to begin building operations should be made a necessary condition to the granting of any charter. It would be the most effective remedy for charter-mongering. It is to be hoped that Mr. Macpherson's motion will carry. It is to the effect that a clause be inserted in the Cassiar Central Railway company's bill compelling the company to give a bond of $3,000 to the government within six months to guarantee their commencing the work of construction within the time specified by the act. A similar clause should be inserted in all private railway acts.

Piles Cured in 3 to 6 Nights--Itching, Burning Skin Disease Relieved in One Day.

Dr. Agnew's Ointment will cure all cases of itching piles in from three to six nights. One application brings comfort. For blind and bleeding piles it is peerless. Also cures tetter, salt rheum, eczema, barber's itch and all eruptions of the skin. Relieves in a day. 35 cents.

Sold by Dean & Hiscocks and Hall & Co.

L. E. Golden, of Ashcroft, B. C., is registered at he Dominion. He is en route to San Francisco.

LAND LAWS AND AGRICULTURE.

To the Editor:—I have just been reading with some astonishment the Hon. C. E. Pooley's reply to Mr. Cotton's motion in the provincial legislature. The hon. gentleman quotes New Zealand in favor of an optional duplicate title system. The fact is that all titles are issued on the land transfer (or Torrens) system, by which the deed of title bears the endorsement by the registrar of all transactions and a duplicate of which is kept in the office records. The result of this system has been to give security of title, simplicity of search, and a low scale of costs for the execution of transfers and mortgages. Mr. Pooley's statements, that the system is costly of introduction and that few would take advantage of it, show that he knows nothing of the working of the system.

Then, in regard to the mortgage tax, Mr. Pooley has a stock argument which he has used on every occasion on which he has discussed this question. That is: "It is simply a question of contract between lender and borrower." He must know, or he is more simple-minded than most people give him credit for, that the conditions of lender and borrower are entirely different. With the lender it is a matter of option; with the borrower it is a matter of necessity. All experience has shown that the borrower must be protected by law against excessive demands by the lender, and there is hardly a nation that recognizes the duty of securing equal justice to all subjects but that nation's laws protect the borrower against such exaction. The New Zealand government have shown beyond question that they can collect mortgage taxation from the lender without a penny of that taxation being reimposed by the lender on the borrower. True, men of Mr. Pooley's ideas were never tired of using the timeworn argument, which he uses as if it were something new and brilliantly original, but experience has shown there is nothing in it.

Mr. Pooley tries to saddle the difficulties of the farmers on the Dominion government, forgetting that the remedies lie, not in high protective duties, but in putting the farmers in a position to compete with their neighbors by supplying good transport, cheap capital with low costs of mortgage and transfer, and exemption of improvements from taxation. These remedies come within the duties of the province. Cumbrous transfer laws and high interest mean high law costs. Mr. Pooley is a lawyer and fights for his profession at the expense of the farmers. The farmers want to promote their cause with their own weapons.

E. A. HAGEN.

CHERRY'S TROUBLES

Were of the Heart—Human Skill was Almost Defeated When Dr. Agnew's Cure for the Heart Fell Into the Breach, and in a Few Minutes After One Dose He Found Great Relief, and Five Bottles Made a Bad Heart a Good One.

Wm. Cherry, of Owen Sound, Ont., writes:- "For the past two years I have been greatly troubled with weakness of the heart and fainting spells. I tried several remedies, and consulted best physicians without any apparent relief. I noticed testimonials of great cures made by Dr. Agnew's Cure for the Heart. I procured a bottle, and the first dose gave me great relief. The first bottles did wonders for me. After using five bottles there are none of the symptoms remaining whatever. I think it a great boon to mankind."

Sold by Dean & Hiscocks and Hall & Co.

HAWAIIAN ANNEXATION.

How the Question Stands With President McKinley.

Washington, March 18.—No plan has yet been arranged between President McKinley and Secretary Sherman and their friends in congress for bringing about Hawaiian annexation. The commissioners from Hawaii, W. O. Smith and Lorin Thurston, are in Washington with a treaty of annexation, but those most interested in the subject, especially members of the senate committee on foreign relations, believe it will be impossible to secure the necessary two-thirds vote for ratification of such a treaty, and they are in favor therefore of adopting a more direct means to accomplish the same result.

J. W. Foster, who visited Hawaii a few months ago in the interest of a cable company seeking a charter from the Dole government, is deeply interested in the annexation question and has discussed it with several senators. The matter has been informally brought to the attention of President McKinley also, but he has as yet not found time to consider the question as to the best method to be adopted to bring about annexation.

STILL MORE TERRITORY.

Italy on the Eve of Ceding an Island To Great Britain.

Paris, March 18.—The Echo de Paris says it understands that Italy is on the eve of ceding to Great Britain the island of Pantellaria, about half way between Africa and Sicily, in exchange for the island of Perim, off the Arabian coast in the Straits of Perim off Babel Mandeb at the entrance to the Red sea. Perim is a bare rock about five miles long, on which turtle shells are taken. Pantellaria has an area of 58 square miles, a population of 7,000, produces fine fruits and has a convenient port at Oppodilo. It can be converted into a strongly fortified station. The Echo de Paris expresses the hope that the powers will refuse to permit the transfer.

CABLE

London, March 18.—Mr. Bayard has written a letter effusive in thanks to Lord Mayor Phillips for the hospitality extended to him at the recent Mansion House banquet. He described the function as a "white stone in the social and political annals of the two countries." The lord mayor has warmly acknowledged the communication.

Mr. Williams' questions relating to Mr. Turner's trip to London are exceedingly timely. If the Hon. Forbes is not competent to transact the business for which he was appointed, he should not be retained at the expense of the province.

ROAR OF GUNS AROUND CRETE

An Austrian Gun-Boat Fires Upon and Sinks a Greek Transport.

Strict Blockade of Crete Began Yesterday—The Admirals All Plead for Peace.

M. De Blowitz's Views on the Situation—Gladstone Writes a Stirring Pamphlet.

Canea, March 18.—The Austrian gunboat Salonica fired upon and sank near Candia a Greek vessel loaded with provisions and munitions of war intended for the Greek forces in Crete.

It appears that the Salonica, while watching the Greek ship, was fired on by a party of insurgents. To this the Austrian warship replied by sinking the Greek craft and driving off the insurgents.

It is feared that when this news becomes generally known in Athens it will serve to greatly irritate the people, and may have the influence of precipitating the crisis which the powers are striving in every way possible to avert.

Constantinople, March 18.—Officials of the Russian embassy here have notified the Turkish government that a Russian transport, having on board troops intended to form the contingent from Russia for the occupation of the island of Crete, according to the programme drawn up by the admirals, will shortly pass through the Dardanelles. The embassies of the other powers have not raised any objections to this proceeding, although by treaty the straits are closed to warships of foreign nations.

A large number of Greek army reserve men and volunteers are leaving here for Athens.

London, March 18.—A dispatch to the London Times from Athens says a strict blockade of Crete began yesterday (Wednesday). Apparently there will be no blockade of Greek ports for some time to come. Insurgents on the island are building fortifications at various strategic points under the direction of Greek officers.

Canea, March 18.—The admirals' proclamation announces that the powers have irrevocably decided to secure complete autonomy for Crete under the sultan's suzerainty, but they are interested before all else to remedy and prevent the repetition of the ills which have desolated the island. They have therefore agreed upon measures intended to regulate the administration of an autonomous regime, to restore peace and order, and guarantees everyone without distinction of race, religion and liberty, security of property, resumption of husbandry and industries, and development of the resources of the country.

"Such," continues the proclamation, "is the aim of the powers. They believe this language will be understood by all, and that a new era is about to open for Crete. Let all lay down their arms. The powers desire peace and order, and need authority to enforce their decisions. They count on the assistance of all the inhabitants of Crete, Christians and Mussulmans, in order to accomplish a work which promises to assure peace and prosperity to Cretans."

Paris, March 18.—It is reported here that Prince Henry of Orleans will be offered the position of governor of Crete.

Athens, March 18.—According to persist rumors circulating here, Colonel Vassos, commander of the Greek army of occupation, has been ordered to oppose the landing of foreign troops now on the way to Crete. This may mean only a formal opposition as a protest against the action of the powers.

Advices from Arta, on the Greek frontier, show that the privations of the Turks there are so severe that some are deserting to the Greek camp.

The Turks at Prevesa, Epirus, are arming in consequence of a conflict provoked by the Greek soldiers belonging to the garrison at Actum.

Turkish troops are occupying posts on the Servian frontier.

Batteries at Arta are being erected under the direction and from plans of German officers.

It is reported in military circles Russia is about to land troops on the coast of Macedonia.

The news that the Servian reserves are being mobilized is the anxiety among the Turkish military authorities at Salonica.

M. DE BLOWITZ'S VIEWS

New York, March 18.—Under the heading "Is Europe on the Brink of War?" the World this morning prints a signed copyright cable from Paris written by M. de Blowitz. The latter says:

"More than once it has been said Russian influence at Constantinople is due to the fact that Russia gave Abdul Hamid his throne. This is very nearly the true one, but not the whole truth and exact truth.

"To guarantee the throne is not the narrow and vague formula, but the rash one, for the upsetting of thrones is usually the work of domestic disintegration, against which action or intervention is more often still both powerless and dangerous. Such an engagement is directly opposed to the usual definite positive policy of Russia.

"The engagement which Russia has taken, according to the most authoritative sources—to which it has been even some time ago—is to guarantee the 'integrity of the Ottoman empire.' This obligations consist in defending the integrity, not only by influence of diplomacy, by moral suasion, but by force, by land and sea power.

"The rights consist of its taking of this integrity when menaced or promised by eventual strategic or preventive measures, in occupying points judged to be strategically necessary on land and sea, and assuring of certain compensations, all this menacing because quite unknown between Russia and Turkey."

In conclusion M. de Blowitz says: "Europe, however, I am convinced will finally triumph, owing to the date which it runs. But Colonel Vassos may prolong the danger and disturb the peace of Europe. For this reason we must not be in too great a hurry to see the Cretan business settled.

"In any case to hasten the end Greece must not be allowed to interfere with the powers; it can only create dangers."

THE OLD MAN ELOQUENT

London, March 18.—There will be published to-morrow by John Murray a sixteen page pamphlet in the form of a letter from the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, under date of March 13th, to the Duke of Westminster. It furnishes markable evidence of Mr. Gladstone's mental activity and interest in political situation.

The letter begins by saying that prohibition is for rest and peace almost every grain of sand is a part of the shore, and, connected as I have been for nearly half a century with the eastern question, I feel that inclination does not suffice to justify silence.

The letter then proceeds to review events from the beginnig of the Armenian massacres, and unsparingly arraigns the powers. Referring to his action in 1880 to establish a concert in Europe Mr. Gladstone says: "We soon discovered that for several of the powers a concert bore a significance to the variance with that which we attached to it. At present the powers have no common purposes to bind them together. But what is worse than all, this divided and ineffecual co-operation of governments is to shut out other people from this mischief we are now suffering."

ENGLAND MAKES READY

London, March 18.—It is announced that a detachment of 600 men from the Seaforth Highlanders has been ordered to the island of Crete immediately from Malta. The vessels belonging to the British Mediterranean squadron at Malta, have been instructed to proceed immediately for Create to reinforce the British squadron there.

The correspondent of the Times informed on high authority that the advance of Turkish troops across the frontier is now confidently expected. Fifteen thousand Greek troops will be at once for Volo. The government reserving £16,000 of specie for payment of July coupons.

M. Averoff, the wealthy Greek Alexander, who contributed 100,000 drachms towards the expense of the restoration of the Stadion, has offered to provide 40,000 uniforms. The Greeks of Marseilles have sent £10,000 in contribution to the emergency war fund.

Secret and rapid preparations are being made at Woolwich and other military establishments of Great Britain. The chiefs of the various departments have been ordered to prepare special regiments available for service. A number of large steamships have been chartered by the government and have been ordered to embark at Woolwich for Malta. Two thousand tons of the stores have arrived. Trouble is expected at the Cape of Good Hope. War stores are being forwarded there by all the Union steamers, which have been fitted with special magazines.

Canea, March 18.—Colonel Vassos has transferred his headquarters to one of the most mountainous and inaccessible position on the island. This is taken to indicate that Greece is firmly resolved not to recall her troops, a step which is regarded as impossible in the face of the strong national feeling. The move will strongly fortify his new position. He is revictualed for several months and is now able to await the course of events.

All the plans for the restoration of Malmaison, formerly the residence of Empress Josephine, have now been completed. The work is to cost in the neighborhood of $100,000, and will be paid by M. Osiris, a munificent patron of art and archaeology.

Cures Talk

"Cures talk" in favor of Hood's Sarsaparilla, as for no other medicine. Its great cures recorded in truthful, convincing language of grateful men and women, constitute its most effective advertising. Many of these cures are marvelous. They have won the confidence of the people; have given Hood's Sarsaparilla the largest sales in the world, and have made necessary for its manufacture the greatest laboratory on earth. Hood's Sarsaparilla is known by the cures it has made—cures of scrofula, salt rheum and eczema, cures of rheumatism, neuralgia and weak nerves, cures of dyspepsia, liver troubles, catarrh—cures which prove

Hood's Sarsaparilla

Is the best—in fact the One True Blood Purifier.

Hood's Pills cure liver ills; easy to take, easy to operate. 25c.