

The Colonist.

MONDAY, MAY 9, 1898.

THE STUDY OF GEOGRAPHY.

Great Britain has possessions in every corner of the world; yet it is said that in no civilized country is geography given so little attention in the schools. We are disposed to think this must be true, judging from the phenomenal exhibitions of ignorance of simple geographical facts shown by educated people in the Mother Country. Indeed, one may say that the last thing that the majority of the people anywhere learn is general geography, and that most people never get anything more than a hazy idea of it. Yet it is a study replete with interest and of great value, the opinion of some English educators to the contrary notwithstanding. The intelligent study of geography has a broadening effect upon the mind. It takes a good deal of the natural provincialism out of a youth, by showing him that the part of the world, about which he knows very little or nothing at all is by far the greater part. The intense provincialism of the people of the United States is due to the fact that the schools teach scarcely anything about the geography of countries except their own. This is taught with much minuteness of detail. It is a common thing to find a graduate of the common schools of the United States, who can draw at a moment's notice a fairly correct map of any state of the Union and mark the situation of the chief cities. How many pupils of the schools of Victoria could draw from a memory correct maps of the provinces of Canada? Yet we do not think that geography is slighted in our schools. The results of the close study of United States geography has developed the opinion among the younger people of that country that nearly all the world worth talking about is within its borders. We recall the case of a graduate of a college and an experienced newspaper man who was utterly amazed to learn accidentally that the area of Canada was greater than that of the United States. The relations of Canada with the rest of the world are broadening all the time. It is desirable, therefore, that the children of our schools should be taught much about other countries, until they become reasonably familiar with all the salient facts regarding them. A knowledge of geography adds greatly to the interest with which the news of the day is read. By it one gets into the habit of localizing events, which are then understood in the light cast upon them by the character and surroundings of the country in which they occur. With the study of geography there ought to go the study of the outlines of general history. When the two are taken together it is surprising how much interest each lends to the other. We do not think a school curriculum complete which does not give every principal country in the world. It would be an error to try to cover too much ground in this work, and it is very questionable if text books should be used for the purpose. Weekly lectures by teachers to the school, of an hour's duration, are an excellent means of covering the field. This would require the teacher to read up and make preparation, but the effect beyond the tone of the school has always been found good wherever it has been tried.

A COLLAPSED OPPOSITION.

The session is nearing its end. It has been a long one, long enough necessarily and rendered longer by the obstructive tactics of the opposition. But its length has one good feature. We were told that that was the intention of the government to rush through supply early and prorogue the house so as not to give the opposition an opportunity to ventilate the terrible grievances, which their newspaper supporters claim exist. We think every one will admit that there has been time enough to put in a half dozen systems of ventilation, if there was anything to ventilate. If there are grievances, there has been ample opportunity to set them forth. If any one of the things persistently alleged in general terms against the government during the recess, has the least foundation in fact, the long session has afforded every facility to show it up. The opposition have spent long and dreary hours in what they are pleased to call debate; they have filled the order paper full of notices of motion and questions to the ministers; they have had quires of returns brought down; but the first member has yet to rise in his place in the house and say, much less specifically charge, that the government has been guilty of any wrong. There has been a lot of vague talk in the house, just as there has been in the press, but of specific allegations of wrong-doing, that is of allegations which could be challenged and for or against which proof could be given, so that first the house and after the house the country could pronounce a verdict, there has been an absolute lack.

The position taken by the opposition press has been and is that the government is: Sectional, Negligent, Incompetent, Corrupt. Given to the prostitution of public interests to private ends. These are serious charges. If any of them is true the government ought to be driven out of office. If they are all true, the members of the government ought to be driven out of public life. Whether they are true or untrue is not a matter of opinion. It is a matter of fact. It can be proved just as any other fact can be proved. The means of obtaining proof, if any evidence is in exist-

ence, are at the disposal of every member of the legislature. There is not an administrative act, which any gentleman on either side of the house may not fully and freely investigate, if he is prepared to state to the house that he thinks he can prove that any wrong is concealed in it. Except the very few incomplete negotiations which the government may have in hand, there is not a single question of policy or administration, which every member of the house may not lay bare for the information of the public.

If the government is sectional, why has no member risen in his place in the house and adduced proof of the fact? What the government has done is public property. If any member chooses to think its policy is sectional, he is presumed to have some fact or facts in mind which are the basis of such a belief. We ask the public if they will accept the opinion of an opposition member on such a point, when that member has had three months of opportunity to show that his belief has any foundation.

If the government has been negligent, it surely ought to be possible to name some specific cases of neglect. Have any been named? If so what are they, when were they named and by whom?

If the government is incompetent, surely it ought to be an easy matter to point out something which it has done improperly or has wholly omitted to do. One swallow does not make a summer and one unwise act would not stamp a government as incompetent, unless it was in regard to a matter of supreme importance. But we have not heard even of a single act of this nature. If the opposition speeches delivered during the present session could be strung out in a line they would encircle the province with a wishy-washy flood of captious chatter, but if they were boiled down to bet at the residuum of fact, there would be nothing left. Everything would evaporate. What looks like sugar is only scum, to borrow a simile from the sugar maple orchards.

If the government is corrupt, it must have committed some corrupt act. Corruption implies some actual wrong done, some dishonest use made of public money, public patronage or official position. A corrupt public man is the most dangerous of all men. He is unworthy of even a shred of confidence. No one is infallible, so that every minister of the Crown will make some mistakes. Few men are quite as prompt in attending to public affairs as others think they ought to be. Sectional feelings influence us all to some extent and it is no great crime to be influenced by them; that is a man may be honest and yet be sectional. But corruption implies actual personal dishonesty. There is no such thing as political corruption distinct from personal dishonesty, and before one political party charges it against another, it ought to be prepared to adduce facts which will support the allegation. Have any charges of corruption been preferred in the legislature? None have been. Have any corrupt acts been suggested? The answer is: No. Has any narrative of events been laid before the house from which even by forced reasoning the possibility of corruption could be inferred? Every honest man must admit that nothing of the sort has been brought to the attention of the house, and so we say that the province ought to have heard the last of these freely made charges of corruption.

There remains the fifth ground of attack, namely that of prostituting public interests to personal ends. This is a species of political wrong-doing, which may be as mischievous as actual corrupt dealing, but does not imply as dishonorable motives. It may even be done with good motives. It is a misuse of power to which good men often succumb. With some knowledge of how political influence is employed in other parts of the world than British Columbia, we say that the ministry of this province is singularly clear from anything of this nature. During the last ten years the opportunities for personal aggrandizement at the public expense have been many in this province; but no case can be cited where ministers or their friends have profited by them. It is, however, no part of our duty to prove a negative. The point we wish to make is that the opposition have utterly failed, not only to make out an affirmative case on this point, but even, when face to face with the ministers, to suggest remotely that the foundation for such a case exists. Behind the backs of the ministers they have been very brave. They would have had the people believe that all the powers of the ministry are regularly prostituted in order that certain political friends and even the ministers themselves may be benefited. In the house when the ministers are at hand to meet each and every charge and demand proof, when the accused stand ready to demand that specific allegations shall take the place of cowardly innuendo, the opposition are dumb, and by their silence stand convicted before the public of having trusted to base slander as a means of discrediting their opponents.

In view of what has been above set forth, we feel that the country will bear us out in saying that the opposition has collapsed. We have not referred to their total failure to suggest an affirmative policy. They have chosen to rest their case upon assaults upon the government on the lines above indicated. We have shown how ignominiously they have failed. No defence of the administration is necessary. The opposition must be non-suited in the court of public opinion.

Speaking of the so-called "cheap money" bill, the Winnipeg News-Bulletin says: "An example of advanced legislation, that gives promise of serving a useful purpose, comes from British Columbia, a province that in government, as in other things, is displaying great intelligence and enterprise and showing the way to the rest of the Dominion."

This is well said, and we think the compliment is well deserved. The reputation of British Columbia, has advanced with leaps and bounds recently. In no way has this been more noticeable than in the reputation of the local government. A year or so ago, owing to unmetamorphosed misrepresentations sent out of the province by certain dirty birds, who thought it a monstrously clever thing to befool their own nests, an impression was created in influential quarters in the East far from complimentary to Hon. Mr. Turner and his associates. This has been wholly removed and the provincial ministry is recognized throughout Canada as handling with ability problems of exceptional difficulty.

The News-Advertiser talks about the government's "mechanical majority." That is a strange expression from an opposition paper. We suppose if there ever was such a thing as a "mechanical" political combination, it is the opposition in the present legislature. This is shown in a remarkable manner in the discussions of bills in committee. It is no uncommon thing to find the supporters of the government differing upon details; but the opposition vote "en bloc" always. There is no possible position for a question of Imperial policy down to the phraseology of some sentence upon the intention of which the whole house is agreed, that the opposition does not vote on as one man.

The Stocan City News thinks that if the opposition had some sort of a policy the province might recognize them as they cannot even agree upon a leader they must be a poor lot. The News says that they have shown that they have no confidence in themselves, and this being the case the voters will doubtless take occasion to record no confidence in them at the election.

The Grand Forks Miner says the defeat of the Corbin charter was the most corrupt vote ever given by Canadian representatives, and that the provincial redistribution bill is corrupt and contemptible. We wonder if the Miner realizes the meaning of the words it employs.

PARTY LINES IN PROVINCIAL POLITICS.

A few days ago the Colonist expressed what it understood to be the views of the provincial government and its friends on the question of introducing federal party lines in provincial politics. We are able to present to-day a letter from Hon. J. H. Turner, premier, in which he distinctly takes the same position. Mr. Turner's language goes even further than the Colonist did. The request that voters, "whether Liberal or Conservative, should either support or oppose the present government as British Columbians and from no other consideration," is as squarely put as anything can be. It is manly and straightforward and will be highly gratifying to the people of the whole province, except the comparatively few, who happen to see a different course taken, and even they will not withhold their tribute of approval, which a frank and fearless declaration in politics always elicits. Mr. Turner in substance says that he wants British Columbians to judge him and his administration as British Columbians. It is a reasonable request. It will meet a hearty response. Following is the Premier's letter:

A. J. McLellan, Esq., Chairman of Committee, Provincial Political Association, Victoria: My Dear Mr. McLellan—I understand that it is being freely circulated that Dominion party lines are to be introduced into the coming provincial elections, and that voters will be asked to vote as Liberals or Conservatives, and not as supporters of the present government.

I desire on behalf of the government to make a distinct statement on this point. There is no desire on our part to introduce Dominion party politics in any way in the coming contest. Our views are that Dominion and Provincial politics are entirely distinct and should be kept wholly separate. It is therefore requested that voters, whether Liberal or Conservative, should either support or oppose the present government as British Columbians and from no other consideration.

As a government we have never taken any part or expressed any views which could be construed as identifying us with either one party or the other. Believe me to be, Very sincerely yours, J. H. TURNER. Victoria, May 3rd, 1898.

CIVIC TAXATION.

A correspondent directs attention to the proposed additions to the taxation of the city. Two proposals are made. One is to make the special school rate three mills on the dollar instead of two as at present, and the other is to increase the business licenses. It seems strange that a matter of this nature should have been kept back until so late a day in the session. Legislation affecting the direct taxation of property owners and business men within any municipality ought not to be kept back so long that those affected by it have little or no opportunity to make their voices heard. We do not say that the necessities of the school board do not render the addition to the tax essential, but we make the point that the proposed increase is of concern to others besides the members of the city council and the school trustees. It by no means follows that because these gentlemen are agreed that it is best to have an addition to the rate of taxation, the people of the city are satisfied to have it imposed. It is a mistake, and a very serious one, to have a matter of this kind put through the legislature without time being allowed for those who are opposed to it to make themselves heard through petition. We

do not say that the proposed petition of one mill is not called for. Indeed, there seems to be no doubt about more money being required than is raised for the support of schools; but there is a great deal in the point taken by our correspondent that these two sets of officials have no authority to speak for all the taxpayers. We believe it would be a salutary rule for the legislature to require the publication of notice for at least one month before any legislation could be introduced to increase the rate of taxation in any municipality.

The provision regarding an increase in the license fees is one that calls for much consideration. We understand that these fees are already higher in this city than in Vancouver, and that already this difference has been told against Victoria. If this is so, to double the wholesale license and greatly increase that for retailers will naturally have the effect of driving business men out of the city, or at least of preventing new establishments from being opened up. One of the first things which business men ask, when inquiring into the advantages of any locality for any line of business, is as to the rate of taxation. It is not the actual amount of the tax in any one case which affects the decision so much as the relative taxation between rival points. If the city cannot get along without this increase, there is nothing more to be said, but we are not sure that this point has been established.

We think it is desirable for the city council to have the power it asks to settle the Point Ellice bridge suits, and the proposed provision to cover this point seems to be reasonable. The citizens will be very glad to have these suits disposed of at the earliest possible opportunity.

BY WAY OF VARIETY.

"Are you getting ahead in your bicycle learning?" said Amy to Mabel. "I am getting better than that. I'm doing better than that. That is the positive form, while I have reached the comparative. I often get ahead,"—Chicago Post.

"I admit," he said, "that I am poor and cannot support you in the style to which you have been accustomed, but there is still hope. My mother is a widow and very wealthy."—"True," she replied, "but she is of the wrong sex."—Chicago Post.

Edwin—You would not take that uncle of mine to be a sensitive plant at all, would you? Reginald—He certainly does not look it. Edwin—Well, he is. Attempt to touch him and he closes up immediately.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Miss Rockingham—Did papa give you any encouragement when you asked him for me, to-day? Mr. Hopeleigh—Well, perhaps he calls it encouragement. He told me to prove that I am fit to go to the war, and added that if I got back alive he'll think about it.—Chicago News.

"I suppose that there is great excitement in the camp at Chickamauga battle field," remarked the Snake Editor. "Yes, it is in tents," replied the Horse Editor.—Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

"What's the matter with old Bullion?" "He's mad as a clear through." "What's the cause?" "He said if any of his employees wanted to go to war he would keep their positions for them, and give them full pay for the time they were gone."—"Yes." "And now his pretty typewriter is going to enlist as a vivandiere."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A little pool once loved the sun. A little pool left from a flood: The sun looked down with ardent glance And then that puddle's name was mud. OF INTEREST TO MEN.

The attention of the reader is called to an attractive little book lately published by that eminent physician, G. H. BOBERTS, M.D., 222 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Mich. This book is one of interest to every man and its pleasant and honest advice will certainly be of the greatest value to any one desirous of securing perfect health and vigor. A request for a free and useful copy will be complied with, if addressed as above and the Victoria Colonist mentioned.

Mrs. J. T. Jones of Lake District who was some months ago charged with stealing a quantity of goods, property of Mr. F. Pemberton, Foot's agent, at whose instigation it is alleged the proceedings were commenced. The action will be tried before a judge and a special jury on the 17th.

NOTICE—Sixty days after date I intend to make application to the Honorable the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works for permission to purchase one hundred and sixty (160) acres of land described as follows: Commencing at the northeast corner of D. R. Irvine's claim, thence 40 chains north, thence 40 chains west, thence south to shore line and along the shore line to D. R. Irvine's north-west corner, thence 40 chains, more or less, to point of commencement. M. E. OLIVER, ml. Dated March 9, 1898.

NOTICE—Sixty days after date I intend to make application to the Honorable the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works for permission to purchase one hundred and sixty (160) acres of land on the east side of Kitchikan Harbor, described as follows: Commencing at the northeast corner of E. Oliver's claim, thence 40 chains west, thence 40 chains south, thence 40 chains more or less east to shore, thence north along shore line to W. E. Oliver's southwest corner, thence 40 chains more or less north to point of commencement. M. E. OLIVER, ml. Dated March 9, 1898.

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NOTICE is hereby given that two months after the date of the first publication of this notice in the British Columbia Gazette, I intend to apply to the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works at the Lands and Works Department, Victoria, B. C., for permission to purchase three hundred and twenty (320) acres of unsurveyed, unoccupied and unreserved Crown lands situate in Cassiar District on the headwaters of Salmon Creek, a tributary of the Cheesey and about thirty-five miles from Telegraph Creek Landing, Cassiar District, British Columbia, and more particularly described as follows: Commencing at the initial post erected at point of the second of small Salmon Creek lake at the headwaters of Salmon Creek, thence north about five hundred (500) feet south of the horse trail; thence running westerly eighty (80) chains; thence southerly eighty (80) chains; thence easterly eighty (80) chains; thence northerly eighty (80) chains to the initial post aforesaid. CHAS. E. McDONALD, ml. Telegraph Creek, 15th March, 1898. sp 9.

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SPAIN'S SE... Not Seeking an... ble They H... The United Sta... the Atl... New Turn of A... arations fo... sion... Washington, M... whether the navy... or disappointed b... late this afternoon... and state departm... the Spanish squa... Cadiz, Spain. Th... from attack is l... sured and the wa... tary operations in... the risk of having... line of communica... On the other h... no enduring pea... the Spanish navy... and it now appea... United States sail... minds to go after... very much more... meeting them nea... It was suggeste... here of the war... possibility that... might make a q... Pacific through th... tack Manila. It... to the common u... canal is open to w... so that if the Span... course, they wou... any pursuing fleet... Atlantic. It is s... ever, that it m... take the great risk... their own ports b... considerable a pos... strength as would... match Dewey. Nothing was in... Sampson to-day b... expectation that h... coming from his... next twenty-four... means an attack... cannot be learned... One effect of the... squadron has been... the preparation of... dispatching milita... It has also caused... concentration plan... believed to be the... is no longer opp... extensive drilling... ceasing. The res... need these ships... once into the fra... tional Guard enter... vice the fleet, b... from a military p... the regulars, and... ceded its purpose... these regular troop... coast for shipment... them to Chicmau... was shown by the... orders issued to t... there may yet be... programme of conc... shown signs of w... The quartermast... under charter 27... the transport of... speaking these sh... 000 men. Others... rapidly as possib... water department... assemble at the... Tampa, Mobile, N... eastern cities, a... seat there. The... be expected to fur... which would be... ron and entered th... there are signs o... transports will be... Admiral Sampson... secure proper con... navy-objects very... the task of convo... ports. It insists... of the convoy of... transports should... fleet to start from... is likely to prevail... the state to-dai... for carrying o... in the adjacent... other authorizing... volunteer signal... bers of which mus... telegraphers. CUBAN... Madrid, May 10... from Havana to... steamer Montzer... uable cargo of tr... of money intended... the United States... port of Cienfuegos... the blockade of... ly. It is claimed... that the blockade... is ineffective. THE PRO... Washington, M... ed at the adjuna... morning show th... mustered into th... This is the first... that by this time... mustered is about... bers. HAWAIIAN... Washington, M... mittee on foreign... consider the Haw... but finally next Thursday. SPAIN'S HO... Martial Law Cre... tion—Press o... Madrid, May 1... deputies to-day t... strongly proteste... tion of martial law... have been no disc... at the instigat... authorities of Bar... reason for th... the cataline de... would postpone th...