

The Colonist.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1898.

TO-NIGHT'S MEETING.

It is hardly necessary to ask the citizens to turn out in force at the public meeting in the city hall this evening, when the Committee of Fifty will present its report. Popular interest has been very fully aroused in the question of municipal reform. The platform proposed by the committee presents many admirable features, but its promulgation will be of very little utility unless the people at large take it up and elect a city government pledged to carry it into effect.

THE COWICHAN CONTEST.

The Colonist has not thought it necessary to say much in regard to the contest in Cowichan, because it has felt all along that most people in that constituency very fully appreciate the situation and are determined to see that Mr. Robertson is returned by a handsome majority. The references made to the election in this article are more for the purpose of showing a hearty sympathy with the candidature of that gentleman than because we think it necessary to say anything to influence the voters. Such acquaintance as the Colonist has with Mr. Robertson convinces it that he is a gentleman whom any constituency might be glad to entrust with its confidence, he is independent and progressive in his views and has an intelligent grasp of the needs of the district, where all his interests are centered.

In putting Mr. Sword forward as a candidate, Mr. Semlin has challenged an expression from the people of Cowichan upon the constitutional question involved in the events which led up to the change of government. If the people of Cowichan believe that a lieutenant-governor has the right to anticipate the verdict of the people's representatives, and before the elections are over, and while the completion of the house is uncertain, to precipitate a political crisis, which completely reverses the policy solemnly confirmed by the legislature, they have now an opportunity of saying so. We draw attention to a view of this case, which has not been presented before, so far as we know. In response to a general demand for a progressive policy, Mr. Turner's government inaugurated a general scheme, which embraced all parts of the province, and the legislature gave it a hearty endorsement. This policy embraced railway construction, the opening of trails, the construction of roads, bridges and public buildings wherever they were needed. It contemplated the encouragement of capitalists and enterprising men to invest in British Columbia industries. This policy was confirmed by the legislature. There is not the shadow of a doubt that it was also confirmed by the people. There is not a man of intelligence in British Columbia who does not know that, if the lieutenant-governor had kept his hands off, Mr. Turner would have had a good working majority in the house. The very essence of responsible government is that it shall be left to the people's representatives in the legislature to pronounce for or against any line of policy, and it is the duty of the lieutenant-governor to carry into effect the decisions reached by them. We do not suggest that Lieutenant-Governor McInnes is opposed to a policy of progress and development. Indeed we are inclined altogether to the opposite view. But this is not the point. His interference may not have been intended to alter the policy adopted by the legislature, but it has had that effect. It has placed in power a government of the most reactionary character. Progress has been stopped in all directions. Take two minor instances in parts of the province remote from each other. One saw mill company in Kootenay has publicly stated that it will be obliged to suspend operations or else go to the United States for logs, because the government has decided to allow no one to cut any more timber on public lands. Miners and others who have gone into Atlin, have been obliged to suspend their proposed building operations because the government has decided to sell no more land. The new policy means stagnation. But this is not all. The Semlin administration has inaugurated a wholesale policy of dismissals. Without any warrant from the people of British Columbia to administer its affairs, without the least assurance that they will command a majority in the house, Mr. Semlin and his colleagues have gone on turning out of office whomsoever they pleased and appointing their own friends to the positions in the public service. Nothing can be more opposed to the principles of responsible government than these things, and they are the direct, although probably unintended, result of the interference of the lieutenant-governor with the right of the people to say who shall be their advisers. A more conspicuous illustration of the danger of departing from those salutary rules, which experience has framed for the ad-

ministration of government, could not very well be suggested. When the house meets, Mr. Semlin and his colleagues are almost certain to be defeated, and if they are, we will have the spectacle of men reversing the policy of a province, dismissing men from the public service and appointing their own henchmen, and yet never having been in the enjoyment of the confidence of the legislature. The voters of Cowichan, as intelligent men, will see what a dangerous precedent has been set by the lieutenant-governor, and will not sanction it by returning Mr. Sword as their representative, but will mark their disapproval by the triumphant election of Mr. Robertson.

For ourselves, we are content to leave the contest upon this high political issue, which is the most important ever submitted to a British Columbia constituency. At the same time, there are other matters of a more local nature which ought not to be lost sight of. Among these is the endeavor to thrust upon Cowichan a gentleman, whose own constituency had grown tired of him, a gentleman who believes the policy of the government ought to be the reduction of the influence of Vancouver Island in the legislature, a gentleman who has for years past shown himself opposed to all interests centering in Vancouver Island. He is also very non-progressive. For the last four years he has been an obstructionist in the way of all legislation calculated to advance the development of the province. No measure of a progressive character has had his support. So identified has he become with the policy of doing nothing that the people of Dewdney refused even to nominate him at the general elections.

On the other hand Mr. Robertson stands for progress and for fair play to all sections of the province. The party, with which he is associated is certain to come into power at a very early day, and he will be able by his vote and influence in the house to aid in carrying out measures which will lead to the enhancement of the material prosperity of this splendid province. We feel confident of being able to chronicle his election by an increased majority, because his constituency is one that is exceptionally well informed on public affairs and will not lose the opportunity to strike a blow for British fair play and for the maintenance of British institutions.

VERY FUNNY BUSINESS.

The News-Advertiser hastens to assure the Colonist that the falsifications of Finance Minister Cotton against the E. & N. railway company are neither novel nor startling. This, although put forward as a reply to the Colonist, is really intended to answer the Province, which claimed that Mr. Joseph Martin was the Mahdi of British Columbia in this particular instance. When Mr. Cotton was asked by the Colonist, he endeavored to be as "novel and startling" as he knew how. Then the Province called him down and told him that he was stealing Mr. Martin's thunder. To this Mr. Cotton replies through his newspaper that he did nothing of the kind, but was in fact only promising to do what Col. Baker threatened to do. And to this the Province has it come at last. Francis Carter-Cotton justifying himself by citing the intentions of Col. Baker. We do not know which is the funnier, his trying to deprive his colleague of his doubtful credit of originating a campaign of confusion, or his attempt to hide under Col. Baker's wing. What worries Mr. Cotton most, however, is the consciousness that he made a very large sized blunder in referring to the matter at all. He now wishes that he had followed Mr. Martin's example and kept out of Cowichan.

The following from Tuesday's News-Advertiser makes the situation funnier than a free ticket to the house to hear the finance minister explain himself, will be presented to the man who can tell what the extract means. We quote: "The Colonist in its desperate attempt to condemn the government's proposal to bring about a change in the conditions prevailing in the section of the Island that is within the limits of the Island railway land grant, really proves too much. It says that hereafter many claims being taken up by prospectors and miners on the land within the grant and that all of these people are to be satisfied with the conditions imposed by the railway company. Does not the Colonist realize that if this is the case, the government's action will certainly certainly disclose the fact that in the railway company and not the crown controlling the lands there is a blessing to the people. That there should be some who are so unreasonable as to persist in desiring that the government should interfere, merely shows that there are people not so well informed as the Colonist and who are always seeking for a change in the present position of affairs."

SELF-PROTECTION.

The Spokesman-Review says the time is not far distant when Spokane will become the centre of a great smelting industry, and the only thing necessary is for President Hill of the Great Northern to speak the word for the use of Spokane the rich country to the north of Spokane. Our contemporary, meaning thereby Kootenay as well as the adjacent portion of the state of Washington. The Colonist has no desire to lay a straw in the way of the prosperity of Spokane, but it thinks the government and people of Canada should take notice of the ambitious designs of that city. Spokane has already become wealthy out of Kootenay, and the thing now to be considered is whether or not this province is to be allowed to become tributary to the establishment of great labor-employing industries there. Pending the decision of the Anglo-American commission, it is premature to express any opinion as to the future status of our ores, and especially of our lead ores, in the market of the United States, but it is

not too soon to draw attention to the urgency of adopting some policy, whereby the establishment of smelters in Canada may be encouraged. Whether people are protectionists or not, they are in favor of self-protection, and the dictate of this instinct prompts us to urge, with all the force we can command, to urge the government of the Dominion to take action, as soon as the result of the reciprocity negotiations shall be put beyond a doubt, to promote smelting in British Columbia. It is of the utmost importance that our ores should be smelted at home, and if a reasonable bonus will lead to that result, that bonus ought to be forthcoming. We also see from what the Spokane paper says, how important it is to preserve the trade of the Kootenay country by the construction of railways in British Columbia, instead of permitting foreign lines to draw away a large proportion of the trade to an alien city. The fight for the control of the trade of the Boundary country is likely to be renewed at the next session of parliament, when the representatives of British Columbia will have a duty to perform. If the people of this province do not fight their own battles, no one else will. Of that they may rest assured.

TO SEVERAL PEOPLE.

A correspondent writes from Prince Albert, N.W.T., as follows: "Would you kindly tell me if there is any labor in the mines about Golden and what are the wages; also if there is any demand for labor outside of mining in British Columbia?"

The sort of query comes frequently to the Colonist, and we assume every newspaper in this province, and it may be well to print a general answer, which we hope Eastern contemporaries will either copy or summarize for the benefit of their readers.

The labor market in all parts of British Columbia is well supplied. This does not mean that a new comer cannot get work. There is something new offering in nearly every part of the province all the time, and consequently the striding man can find employment in the majority of cases, if he has patience, and this requires something to live on. There is not the least use in expecting to find positions ready and waiting for new comers. Every man must stand his chance, and some people find the chance a pretty hard one. Everything depends upon the man himself. Cases have come under the Colonist's observation, where men have come to this province, spent their last dollar in looking for work and had to send for money to take them home; others where men without friends and practically without a cent in the world well over since, have been able to find labor in British Columbia, but the supply of applicants is at present quite equal to it, except where railway construction is going on. There has been, and perhaps now is, a demand for more men than has offered along the line of the railway in course of construction from Robbison to Boundary, and there is also a demand for men to work on the railway in the portion of the province between the Pass to Lake Bennett. But persons contemplating coming to this province ought to remember that the distances between the different points are very great and travelling is expensive. Speaking generally, we may say that it is quite unnecessary for any man to come to British Columbia or anywhere else in the West, for that matter, expecting to find an employer there he can at once secure employment at good wages; but at the same time a steady, energetic man, able to turn his hand to anything that offers, is not likely to remain long unemployed; but such persons should bring some money with them to live on while they are looking for work.

The future timber supply of Kootenay is a matter of very great importance. There will always be enough timber in British Columbia for the use of Whites, but the cost of transporting it to the mills that have been denuded of trees will be considerable and materially reduce the profit of mining. We suggest that stringent regulations ought to be adopted as to the cutting of timber on the Crown lands, that a minimum diameter for all trees to be cut should be enforced, and that a minimum diameter for fuel of timber suitable for sawmills should be stopped so far as can be done. Only such trees as are not, or will not be allowed to grow, become merchantable timber ought to be cut for fuel. The problem is not a serious one as yet, but the time is not far distant when Kootenay will find its timber supply a serious matter, and it is well to sound a warning in time.

Some of the Mainland papers are advocating the formation of a press association for this province. Anything that will give the newspaper people an opportunity of becoming acquainted with each other is worth consideration.

The Columbian, a government supporter, asks the Province, a government supporter, to leave the government alone. This is very funny. It is emblematical of the conditions existing in the ranks of the government.

The St. John Board of Trade is to be congratulated upon its very handsome pamphlet relating to "Canada's Winter Port."

The Toronto Globe deals at very great length with the Canadian Pacific and its relations to the development of the West. It gives a very appreciative view of the work done by Canada for this railway, but adds what seems to be a warning to the company not to expect to have its own "W" after as much as it has had in the past. Assuming that the chief Liberal organ's article was written with a definite object, we would like very much to know what it is. The object is not disclosed by the article itself.

NEWFOUNDLAND'S BOSS

Railway Contractor Likely to Amass Millions Where the People Failed.

Foreign Capital Encouraged to Establish Huge Industries on the Island.

The extent of millionaire Menier's sovereignty over the comparatively insignificant island of Anticosti is completely overshadowed by the enormous extent of the possessions of a single individual on the isolated island of Newfoundland. He is undoubtedly the largest landowner on this continent. Newfoundland is one-sixth larger than Ireland, and E. G. Reid, commonly called "Car" Reid, owns about one-third of the island. Two hundred thousand people regard him pretty much as if he were their feudal baron, and look to him to exploit their country before the end of the year. Reid, ever since he held the destinies of a country more closely in his fingers than Mr. Reid does with his island. Seven thousand square miles of land are absolutely his own, with his enormous wealth of timber and mineral lands, and every mile of his railway system will be owned by him. Reid has not only held the destinies of a country more closely in his fingers than Mr. Reid does with his island. 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