

# THE BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMERCIAL JOURNAL

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## TRADE MATTERS.

In his recent message to Congress President Cleveland significantly observed:—"with natural resources unlimited our progress should not be checked by a false financial policy" and adds "the real trouble that confronts the Government is the maintenance of its gold reserve". It is thus evident that the executive and the cabinet of the United States have no fears as to the future of the country the only matter with which they are concerned is how to deal with the present financial issues. The Democrats have one recipe, the Republicans another, and in the opinion of the solid men of the country, the multitude of counsel and the different modes of treatment prescribed is as with us an exceedingly potent cause of evil. Could the two parties only lay aside partisanship for a while and sit down to patriotically consider the situation they would not be long in devising means to prevent the national progress being checked. It is much the same in this country; where by many people the outs—that is the opposition are regarded as being a species of anarchist inasmuch as they make all manner of objections to the way in which affairs are being conducted, but are afraid to suggest a remedy, even if they have as much confidence in free trade as some of them profess to have.

In Great Britain they are having what is termed "a boom time" in speculation. They have any quantity of idle money seeking investment, but hesitate to put it out in the United States because despite their unlimited natural resources they are afraid of the "false financial policy" which the opponents of the administration are forever denouncing. So it is here, the efforts of the opposition whether in Dominion or Provincial matters never cease. They decry the a laia's ration and in that way injure the country, for to say that its public affairs are improperly administered is the worst blow that could be aimed at it. And so instead of our having British capital more largely embarked in our commercial, manufacturing, mining and other enterprises, the money finds its way into

South African gold mining speculations, and we are practically forced to realize that the present cycle of low prices will last until credit recovers in the United States and Australia—and, we may add Canada. We notice that the city of Victoria is at the present time being deluged by literature issued under the auspices of the Cobden Club and such organizations whose principles, however, they may at some time have been advantageously followed out in the Mother country are not adopted to our conditions. It was by a policy the reverse of that advocated by Cobden and his friends that British industries got their first start and here with, us it is a case of "first creep and then go." Industrially Canada is only now beginning to walk alone; let her enterprises get firm footed before they are forced to submit to the rough tumbling and jostling for which we have no doubt that before so very long they will be prepared.

We are undoubtedly suffering from the ills that have come upon our neighbors by reason of their false financial policy: for heaven's sake let us not add to them the difficulties which could not fail to follow a challenge on our part to conflict with the world, with the odds as Mr. Laurier admits against us, the policy proposed being so one sided that the mouth of the jug was always on the side of our rivals. The claim that goods would be cheaper were trade made more free is also a pretty poor argument, for if most of the goods we consume were imported there would be no work for the operative class; and if they had no money, as the late Sir John Macdonald forcibly demanded, of what use is it however cheap goods may be!

## TRADE SCRIPT.

We have received an insignificant looking handbill asking the public not to forget to ask for the merchants' trade script. It is headed "Free-5 Free" and in the body of it we observe that consumers are advised to take notice that for every cash purchase of \$1 from any merchant whose name appears in the margin you are entitled to 5 per cent. script which will be accepted as five cents on every cash purchase of one dollar. On the handbills are the names of some eighteen business men, who, we take it, are members of an association. We have nothing to say about the association or combination into which these people have entered, but we are inclined to question their right to issue script. We do not say that it is illegal but we are strongly of the opinion that if it is not it approaches very closely to an infraction of the law. It is or it is not an attempt to create a currency—among, it is true, the houses specially

interested—and is not the subject one which demands the consideration of the Deputy Receiver General? Doubtless the parties concerned imagine that they have gone into a splendid advertising scheme; but does it not strike the reader that if they had adopted some more legitimate way of bringing themselves and their business into prominence they would have succeeded equally well, and at the same time be encouraging home enterprises instead of being associated with outsiders who have no local interests, who cinch them out of \$20 or \$25 as membership fees and then leave for outside parts to carry on a similar business there? This kind of thing is we hold far from being a legitimate departure, and the only man really benefitted will be the glib tongued fakir who charges them so much for his mere instructions and suggestions in regard to a thing or two.

In this connection we might remark that a word of counsel to those of our citizens who have the best interests of British Columbia at heart may not be out of place, in connection with the printing and other businesses—we say printing because of our more immediate relations with it. "Don't order a few hundred sheets from local printers and then compare the prices with lots of as many thousand ordered in the East." Similar sized orders of job work can be executed and delivered here at as low a rate as anywhere, and if the same liberality is shown local concerns as is extended to drummers in almost any business local interests would not complain. There is no law to prevent those of the learned profession in the West from making use of eastern enterprise, but there is a law to prevent western enterprise from making use of eastern doctors and lawyers, and this little fact should not be ignored.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA COAL.

We are pleased to notice by the San Francisco coal reports that business is very brisk and prices are steady. It is said, moreover, that during January there were periods when British Columbia coals were almost unprocurable, while tonnage is in demand to carry coal from the Northern mines; extreme rates being paid. It will be remembered that about this time several vessels were lost and others made long delayed passages. It is well understood that Vancouver Island coal is the best that is sold on the Pacific Coast, and we think—though we, of course, are not down to the secrets of the trade, that in view of our proximity to the principal ports of distribution a bigger business ought to be done, were the parties directly interested prepared to make smaller profits upon