The Colonist.

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THE RELIEF OF AGRICULTURE.

The demand for cheaper money, for the change in the incidence of taxation and so on, which we hear so much about nowadays, are like the symptoms of a disease. They show that there is something wrong in that portion of the community from which that demand emanates, and it is right and timely to make some inquiry as to what the real trouble is. We are not going to claim that this demand ought not to receive consideration, any more than we would claim that nothing should be done to alleviate the fever of a typhoid patient; but what we do say is that the remedy for the evils which agriculture suffers from in this Province is not to be found in legislation. It rests with the farmers themselves. It depends upon individual effort and co-operative effort. The two should go hand in hand.

Farming is a business, not a mere makeshift for something else, not a mere last resort for those who are unfit for anything else, and when the business nature of this avocation is better appreciated farmers will be more prosperous. The secret of success in other lines depends upon cost of production, cost of marketing, and the selling price. This is true of locomotive engines, fine laces and potatoes. It is as true of one as it is of the other. It is of more importance to the producer of farm produce, because in his case the margin of profit is small and the conditions affecting it are more diverse and less under the control of the producer. As a general proposition the sale of the produce of the soil in its natural condition is less profitable than its sale in a manufactured condition—using the word manufactured in a broad sense. Thus it may pay a farmer to raise hay and turnips and sell them; under good management it would undoubtedly pay him better to convert his hay and turnips into beef and sell that. A gentleman called at the Colonist office the other day and in the course of conversation said that the farmers of the lower Fraser needed a railway to the interior so as to sell their hay in Kootenay. A little later another caller spoke of the scarcity of beef cattle and said that in the next few weeks the people of Victoria would be fed on stall fed beef from Winnipeg. That the lower Fraser can raise hay and roots equal to Manitoba and stall feed cattle cheaper will, we think, be conceded. The mild Coast winters are favorable to stall feeding cattle. In every climate a certain proportion of the food goes to keep up the animal heat, but less is needed in our climate than in that of the interior. Our grasses are quite as nutritious as those of the prairie, and we think that the acreage per head of live stock is less, either for hay or pasture, here on the Coast than anywhere else in Canada, except perhaps in the marshes at the head of the Bay of Fundy. The yield of roots per acre here is as great as anywhere, and greater than in most places. We venture, therefore, to suggest to the people of the Lower Fraser that if they would grow turnips and use their hay and the roots to fatten cattle it would profit them better than to have a railway built to give them an outlet for their hay, for they would not only be able to supply the present market with the beef which it so much needs, but in the event of a railway being built into Kootenay, would have their produce in a form in which it is readily marketable, and would have the profit on the raw material and on the "manufactured" article as well. This is one of the lines in which the farmers of one portion of the Province might find a means of greatly improving their position, and we submit that the consideration of such matters would really be more to their advantage than efforts to relieve themselves of a few dollars of an inequitable tax, or to reduce the interest on their loans a few dollars a year.

THE QUESTION OF DISALLOWANCE.

The Times begs the entire question of disallowance. The Colonist raised no point as to the power of the Governor General to disallow the British Columbia Southern Act. We have admitted that over and over again. What we discussed yesterday was the right of parliament to instruct the Governor General to disallow an act of the Provincial legislature. What the Times declared calculated to "simplify the question" was Mr. McInnes' motion for an instruction from parliament to the Governor General. Where stands the Times on that?

The Times, asks four questions which may really be considered as two, namely: "Is the act one that may be properly disallowed?" and "Does public opinion demand the disallowance?" We think the first question ought to be answered in the negative. The rules governing disallowance were laid down in a report by Sir John A. Macdonald in 1868. After saying that "the local legislatures should be interfered with as little as possible," he said that the power of disallowance should only be exercised where "the law and the general interests of the Dominion imperatively demand it," and he instanced four classes of cases. Two of them turn on the question of constitutionality; the third applies to those where the legislatures and parliament have concurrent jurisdiction; the fourth is where the act affects the interests of the Dominion generally. The B. C. Southern subsidy cannot possibly come under either of these definitions; but even if it could the demand is not for the disallowance of the subsidy which would stand, even if the act of last session were nullified, but for the disallowance of the act extending the time within which the company may become entitled to the subsidy.

We think that public opinion does not demand the disallowance of the Act. If it did the provincial legislature is the proper place for public opinion to make itself heard, and it has not made itself heard there. Mr. Helmcken had on the order paper for some time a notice of a bill to declare the B. C. Southern subsidy forfeited; but not a petition was presented in favor of it and not a single newspaper expressed approval of it.

The following from the Vancouver World breathes the true spirit and we hope will find expression in the legislature:

We have always favored the perfect sovereignty and unstinted autonomy of each province insofar as the constitution designated the status of each. Once let the Dominion cross the lines guaranteed to the several provinces constituting the confederacy and there will be no end of trouble. Heretofore the Liberals have been pronounced upholders of these doctrines, and we feel assured that at this particular period they will not abrogate the principles of almost a lifetime. Should, however, such a departure be made, the cry will become a universal one throughout this Province that the Dominion must keep its hands off British Columbia.

The World does not think Mr. McInnes' resolution will pass.

THE ANNEXATION OF YUKON.

Mr. Kellie has done well in bringing before the house the question of adding the Yukon territory to British Columbia. It is very true that this Province is already quite large enough; but it is clear that something must be done with Yukon, and that vast area is directly appurtenant to British Columbia. Miners are going to the Yukon valley by hundreds, and if the promise of the present is fulfilled the near future will see thousands of people in the great placer regions. It is hardly possible to establish any regular government there. Yukon cannot send delegates to the Territorial Council, and it would be absurd to attempt to administer its affairs from Regina. It would be still more absurd to attempt to do so from Ottawa with the help of the Mounted Police. Large property rights will be created in the Yukon, and the proper place to deal with these is in the courts of this Province, which, when the Dominion government has put a customs house officer on the frontier, will be the headquarters of the trade of the mining region. For the proper administration of criminal law it is highly important that the courts of this Province should have jurisdiction over the territory, and the policing of it could be very satisfactorily done from Victoria. There would be many advantages to all concerned if the Yukon were annexed to this Province, and the only objection which suggests itself to us is that the boundaries of the Province would be greatly extended and additional work be cast upon the provincial departments. The expense of such work, which will have to be done in any event, and can probably be kept at a lower figure if the territory is annexed to British Columbia than if a new territorial government is organized, would, of course, be met by a grant from the federal treasury.

We suggest that the boundary of the proposed addition to the Province might be defined by extending its present eastern boundary along the 120th meridian to its intersection with the Mackenzie river, and thence following the Mackenzie to the Arctic ocean. This would include approximately 150,000 square miles of territory. Much of it would, from present indications, be of no great value, although reports are very conflicting as to the existence of the precious metals in the country between the Yukon and the Mackenzie. A great chain of lakes is alleged to lie west of the Mackenzie, but none of the maps as yet show them. A number of mountain ranges are arbitarily drawn where those lake are alleged to be. We have very recently heard of a exploratory tour undertaken in the section of the Yukon now under consideration by two courageous prospectors, only one of whom returned, the other having perished. The report brought out by the survivor was very favorable, and he was said to be organizing for another trip. Just how much truth there is in this we do not pretend to know. It is perhaps safe to say that of the suggested addition to the Province fully one hundred square miles are to all intents and purposes unknown.

THIBET.

A report comes from China to the effect that the Pekin government proposes to annex Thibet in order to checkmate the designs of the British government, which is alleged to entertain the idea of bringing this little known country under the control of the Indian government. Thibet is separated from Hindustan by the Himalayas and from China proper by the Yun-ting mountains. These two ranges inclose the kingdom on three sides, the northern boundary being a mountain range, which separates it from the Desert of Gobi. British India thus bounds it on the south and west, projecting a broad and somewhat mountainous belt between it and Afghanistan. Cashmere, which is British territory, is coterminous with Thibet, and affords the best means of access. Russia has not yet extended her frontier within five hundred miles of the Thibetan table land, and the intervening country is very difficult of access. If it came to a dash for the control of Thibet, Great Britain would stand in much the best possible chance of all the powers.

So very little is known of this country that authorities disagree as to whether it is or is not already a dependency of China. Its area is about 750,000 square miles, its population a little above a million, but the latter is only a vague estimate. Its people are very far from being warlike, being in this respect radically different from the mountaineers to the west. If there is anything at all in the claim that Great Britain intends to occupy it, this intention is undoubtedly due to a belief that it is necessary to head off Russia. Hitherto the open question of the frontier of Russian Turkestan—the Pamir question, as it has been called—has been between the Czar's government on the one side and Great Britain and China on the other. So far as this relates to India, the boundary in the Pamirs has been defined, but there is a wide space between Russian and Chinese Turkestan where there has been no delimitation. Owing to the recent rapprochement of Russia and China there may be danger that the latter power may consent that the territory of the former shall be extended to the Thibetan frontier. If there is danger of this it would become the bounden duty of Great Britain to get first in the field.

THE GOVERNMENT'S RAILWAY POLICY.

We understand that the government measure in aid of railway construction will be submitted to the legislature to-day. The details of the bill have not yet been announced, but we surmise that the aid to be granted will take the form of a cash bonus to certain specified lines. This is on the whole the most satisfactory way of dealing with the matter, because it fixes the responsibility of the Province at a definite amount, and is probably a more useful form of subsidy from the company's standpoint than a guarantee of interest on a larger sum. If this is the plan that shall be adopted and any of the companies entitled to subsidies under the proposed measure are also entitled to land subsidies, we assume that the bill will contain a proviso requiring the companies to sell their lands at present government prices, namely, $1.00, $2.50 and $5.00 according to the class of the land, and that the title to the purchaser shall carry everything except the precious metals. If the companies decline to sell their land at such prices any portion held for a higher price should at once become subject to taxation. There ought to be a provision in the act requiring the company applying for the cash subsidy to give a satisfactory guarantee of bona fides. Though opposed to the idea of requiring companies asking a mere naked charter to put up a pledge, to be forfeited in case the road is not begun within the time limited in the charter, we believe that if a railway company asks the government to contract with it for the payment of a cash subsidy, it ought to give evidence of its good faith. We assume the bill will contain some provisions as to the plans and specifications being submitted to the governor-in-council. We think this is the usual plan followed in regard to cash subsidies.

If the proposed aid is hedged about with conditions of this character, which, while not too severe upon the companies will properly protect the public interests, we believe the measure will meet with the hearty approval of the large majority of the people. There is undoubtedly a demand for a measure of this nature. Events have demonstrated that British Columbia possesses within her borders all the natural resources necessary for wonderful progress. The most skeptical are forced to admit that when the promise of the future is fulfilled we will have within this Province many very populous and prosperous communities and that the Pacific Slope of Canada will claim a position beside the most favored portion of the American continent. The world has begun to recognize this. There is not a centre of capital in which the opportunities for investment here have not been discussed. There is not a land from which desirable immigration can be obtained where the advantages offered by this Province to colonists are not being considered. To attract this capital and this colonization at the earliest possible day, so that the people who have stood by the Province during its days of hardship may enjoy some of the advantages of the promised prosperity is a work worthy of consideration of the government, the legislature and the press. The government has, we believe, fully appreciated its responsibility on the premises, and has resolved to do all that can reasonably be asked at the present time to promote this desirable result. It will ask the legislature, not only to give needed aid to certain important projects, but to put on record the best possible proof of the faith of the people of British Columbia on the resources of the Province. This of itself is a most excellent thing and will not fail to attract the attention of capitalists the world over, and stimulate the desire of enterprising men everywhere to share in the forthcoming era of progress.

THE CROW'S NEST PASS ROAD.

In the Toronto Globe of March 25th is an interesting letter on the Crow's Nest Pass railway, dated at Lethbridge and written from a C.P.R. standpoint. In view of the fact that the C.P.R. will build the road the letter has a special interest. The following extract is worth quoting in its entirety:

The first step the Canadian Pacific took towards building through the Crow's Nest was to acquire the section of the Alberta railway from Dunmore to Lethbridge, 110 miles, and convert it from a narrow to a standard gauge. Then it started surveying for a line through the Crow's Nest Pass and the Moyie Pass to a connection with the Columbia & Kootenay railway at Nelson. It has done a considerable amount of grading between Lethbridge and the Crow's Nest, has built from Nelson to Robson and has pushed the surveys westward from Robson towards Hope. In all, it has spent about $2,250,000 on the work. Its aim is not only to build from Lethbridge to Nelson, but to carry the line ultimately to Hope, driving branches and mine-spurs into the region to open it up thoroughly to the process of development. This will cost a heap of money. The estimate is $35,000,000. The distance from Dunmore to Hope by the Crow's Nest will exceed 800 miles as against 740 by the present main line, so that the new route will not be of much service for through traffic, but will have to depend on the local business created by the mines and smelters. For the present, however, the construction of the Crow's Nest Pass road as far as Nelson with spurs running into the best of the mineral lands is all that can be accomplished. This would give the smelters cheap fuel, which is essential to the low grade ore mines, and would be a boon to all. All that remains, assuming the immediate construction of the line to be called for, is for the Dominion government to grant assistance on such conditions as it deems advisable and as the company is willing to accept. No doubt the company will put the conditions in one scale and the amount of the promised bonus in the other and decide what to do, whether to take the bonus along with the conditions or go ahead and build wholly at its own expense without any conditions to hamper its future action, which it has a right to do under the charter of 1880. In the latter case, of course, it would have absolute command of the situation and might become a monopoly with a vengeance.

The letter conveys the impression that a subsidy of $10,000 a mile, or one-third the estimated cost for the line from Lethbridge to Nelson, would be considered by the company as adequate, and for this "Mr. Laurier might fairly ask for reasonable maximum rates on merchandise, flour, coal, coke and ore to be specified in the contract, with the right to inquire into the complaints of shippers and remove grievances. He might further insist that if this covenant is violated by the company, parliament or the governor-in-council shall have power to grant running powers over the line to other roads."

It is further pointed out that the coal lands are not such a great bonanza as has been represented, as there are other coal lands in British Columbia which can supply the smelters, if any attempt is made to put up the price. The writer of the letter thinks that the policy of the C.P.R. would be to encourage cheap coal for purely business reasons. He states that all the coal lands covered by the subsidy only amount to 16,000 acres, but this is doubtless an under estimate.

The writer of the letter suggests in a non-committal way that after all there may be no very great hurry about the matter, for it is not yet sure that mining in Kootenay is on a permanent basis. To this the Globe editorially enters a protest, which, taken in connection with the Lethbridge letter, suggests that letter and editorial were written with a common purpose. We may take it for granted that the Crow's Nest Pass road will be built and built at once by the C.P.R., and that an arrangement will be effected whereby parliament will give a $3,000,000 bonus in consideration of certain concessions by the company. We understand on excellent authority that already an understanding has been reached by which the coal lands of the company will be sold for $10 an acre.

It would save the Nelson Tribune a great deal of trouble if it would devote a whole issue to setting forth the reasons why twice 2 is not 4 when the Colonist says so, although it may be on every other occasion. It may also simplify our contemporary's labors if we admit that every article that appears in the Colonist is written by some member of the government, that another member of the government watches the compositors to see that by no possible means a word gets in type that has not received government sanction, that another member of the government watches the make-up of the paper to see that nothing unauthorized is smuggled into its columns, while the fourth and fifth members are kept busy carrying up buckets full of "pap." This is what makes the session so long. It is also the reason for the backward spring. It is the real crux of the Eastern question and is believed to be the cause of the duplication of the canals on Mars. Meanwhile we beg the Tribune to receive an assurance of our distinguished consideration.

It is greatly to be hoped that the Dominion and Provincial government will soon arrive at a basis of settlement of the Songhees reserve matter. The principle on which the Provincial government want the matter disposed of is that the Indians themselves shall accept what they themselves deem a sufficient reservation elsewhere and that the present reserve will then revert to the Province. As long as the Indians are satisfied it would seem as if the Dominion government could not reasonably ask anything more.

It is once more announced that the United States has just completed the most powerful warship afloat. It is also added that she has been built to go to sea. Apparently the other vessels of Uncle Sam's navy have been under the impression that their twin screws formed a new kind of bicycle, judging by the way they have been trying to go ashore.

The majority of the house yesterday refused, and very wisely, we think, to assent to the populistic idea that the promoters of railway companies should be compelled to put up a forfeit to secure the beginning of work within a certain specified time. As was well pointed out a railway charter confers no monopoly. Mr. Kennedy asked if nobody had ever heard of "chartermongering." Well, a member must be stone deaf who has not. Certain members of the opposition talk about it three times a week on an average, but that is about all any one hears of it. The man has yet to be discovered who does it. The Chartermonger is like the Flying Dutchman—heard of often but never seen. He is the bogie-man, of whom two worthy gentlemen from the mainland dream o' nights and from whom they pray to be delivered by day; but he is as unsubstantial and elusive as any a Will o' the Wisp that ever flitted over a moor in the land whence those gentlemen derive their names and accent.

THE CANADIAN PRESS.

NO DISALLOWANCE.

But so far as the Globe is concerned it is not going to step out of an agitation against the coercion of Manitoba into an agitation for the coercion of British Columbia. So far as we have seen, no Western paper, no citizen of British Columbia, has asked for the disallowance of the British Columbia Southern charter, and it is strictly British Columbia's business.—Toronto Globe, March 24.

GOLD NEAR CALGARY.

Mining operations in the mountains on and near the main line of the C.P.R. are at present taking on a revival that promises to assume solid proportions. A great number of valuable deposits have been long known to exist within 60 to 200 miles west of Calgary. Work on some of these was started as far back as 1883, but had to be stopped for lack of capital. Now that investors have been at last convinced that the mineral is there they are tumbling over each other to get in on the ground floor.—Calgary Herald.

THE CASE WELL STATED.

The indications are that British Columbia is entering upon a period of prosperity that will result in the doubling of its population in a very few years, and as this new population will mainly be engaged, directly or indirectly, in mining operations, the demands for necessaries of life will impart activity to manufactures and the farming industry.—Kootenaian.

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