

## CONCERNING CONSERVATISM.

It is good to be not over-quick to enthuse over the future prospects of large projects; but it seems to us better not to be blind to evident promises.

Conservatism is not merely the reverse of go-ahead-activeness. Nowadays it has become a cloak-word for those who, through ignorance or motive, cry down ALL that is new; it is in fact, a business with some—it takes time to prove them wrong; meanwhile they are building reputations for cautiousness.

Is there to-day any conspicuous railroad, mine or other enterprise, that, at the outset did not meet with the discouragement of influenced or incompetent expert opinion, to say nothing of natural and fostered adverse public opinion? Is there a going business of any sort that has not had its share of more or less genuine initial disfavor? And the fact that to-day there are thousands of going businesses shows how much sounder, and therefore more admirable, was the faith of their founders.

These reflections are prompted by recalling particularly the immense business of the Pan-American Asphalt Co. after asphalt had been denied to exist in Mexico; how, the fabulously rich El Oro and Santa Gertrudis mines of Mexico were reported unfavorably by mining experts; the opposition of press and people in 1878-79 to Sullivan's Mexican railroad projects, which, after completion were more efficient, perhaps, than any other agency, in lifting Mexico out of the hypnotism imposed upon it by Cortez. These illustrations can be paralleled and outranked by examples right at home.

More familiar instances are those antagonistic to systematic rubber culture. Instances have been known where plantation companies have been offered eulogistic periodical publicity for a consideration, and, because they did not invariably meet with acceptances, articles were published discouraging rubber culture—a topic of which the writers, perhaps, knew nothing. And such "opinions" would gain a scattering currency appearing frequently as "a friend's advice not to invest in such enterprises." If first-hand information is sometimes valueless what must distortions of the same be worth at second-hand?

It is to be hoped, however, that the government enquiry recently conducted by Mr. Q. F. Cook, of the Department of Agriculture, will settle all disbelief and skepticism in the matter. A trained botanist, Mr. Cook went into his work with all the resources of his science and of the department at Washington behind him. His report is voluminous, but it unequivocally endorses rubber cultivation under proper conditions, as not only practicable but needful and profitable. Moreover, Mr. Cook states the cultivated rubber of Mexico to be (*Castilla*) to be equal to the "Para" rubber (*Hevea*) of Brazil.

Add to Mr. Cook's opinions those of Mr. Henry C. Pearson, of the *India Rubber World*, a gentleman in the highest standing in the trade, who recently made a trip to Mexico to satisfy himself that the production of rubber by cultivation was practicable.—the ultimate success of properly situated and properly managed rubber plantations seems to be clinched. Mr. Pearson's convictions, because of his thorough technical training and long business experience, rank with Mr. Cook's.

Conservatism is a good quality; but ulterior purposes of irresponsibility, masking as "conservatism" deserve all the discredit that can be given.

Conservatism on the part of investors is good—if it is of the right sort, and not a miscalled timidity, lack-of-faith or suspicious distrust.

Nothing can more seriously injure a country's interests than conservatism—of the wrong sort.—Editorial December Cent per Cent. (Mitchell, Schiller & Barnes, New York.)

## News Summary.

Germany has recognized the Republic of Panama as a sovereign and independent state.

Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, the new British ambassador, arrived in Washington on Monday.

Three negroes were lynched at Belcher, La., on Monday, for complicity in the fatal shooting of Robert Adger.

The management committee of Chamberlain's tariff reform league unanimously passed a cordial vote of thanks to Geo. E. Foster.

Helen Douglass, widow of Frederick Douglass, the well known colored orator, is dead, aged 65. She was a white woman.

A conservative convention on Monday nominated Hon. J. G. H. Bergeron for the vacancy in St. James division of Montreal for the Dominion house.

A general advance in the price of cotton goods from 5 to 10 per cent. will be made within a few days by leading manufacturers. The advance is caused by a big jump in the price of raw cotton.

Arthur Chamberlain, jr., Birmingham, England, nephew of Hon. Jos. Chamberlain, is in Toronto on a business trip. He will visit St. John and Halifax before returning home.

Philadelphia city council's committee on free libraries has voted to accept from Andrew Carnegie the gift of \$1,500,000 for the building of thirty branch libraries in that city.

J. W. Howden, major of Neepawa, Manitoba, has been elected by acclamation to fill the vacancy in the legislature for Beautiful Plains, caused by the death of the late provincial treasurer, Davidson.

A gathering of the Dowieites was held in the Tabernacle at Zion City on Wednesday night. It was called by Dowie for the purpose of starting a fund of \$1,000,000 with which to pay off all indebtedness that hangs over Zion City and himself. Little enthusiasm was shown.

The situation in the Quebec shoe trade remains unchanged. Manufacturers firmly decline to have anything more to do with the union, but state that just as soon as the men are prepared to come forward and sign individual contracts they are ready to open their factory doors.

The youthful self-confessed murderer and train robbers, Peter Neidermeier Harvey VanDine, Gustav Marx and Emil Roeski were arraigned in court at Chicago on Monday night. Marx pleaded guilty to all charges against him but his three accomplices pleaded not guilty.

The marriage of Prince Alexander of Teck to Princess Alice of Albany has been set for the first week in February. The princess is twenty years of age. Prince Alexander, who is the third son of the late Duke of Teck and Princess Mary of Cambridge, is the Princess of Wales' youngest brother. He is twenty-nine years of age.

A company composed mainly of Buffalo capitalists has secured more than 600 acres of Corundum lands in Renfrew county, Eastern Ontario, and will erect there one of the largest corundum reduction plants in the world. Some Toronto and Hamilton men are also interested. The company is to be known as the Corundum Refiner, Limited.

At a meeting of the Ottawa Board of Trade an address was delivered by Geo. Holland on The Effects of the Alaskan Boundary Award, adversely criticising Lord Alverstone's position. At the conclusion of the address Andrew Holland expressed the opinion that British North America should have a Munroe Doctrine of its own, and gave notice of a resolution to the effect that the acquisition by the United States of the French Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, would be detrimental to the interests of Canada, and would undoubtedly lead to friction between Canada and the United States.

George Wyndham, chief secretary for Ireland, speaking at Worthington, said that the government had still a great deal of work to do and that it was not true that a general election was pending. This official confirmation that the government is not meditating a dissolution of parliament will increase the curiosity as to the reason for the holding of frequent cabinet councils. Premier Balfour, Austin Chamberlain, the chancellor of the exchequer, and Lord Lansdowne, secretary of foreign affairs, had conference at the Foreign office on Tuesday, and another cabinet meeting will be held on Friday. It is the general belief that the situation in the Far East is causing anxiety owing to the unexpected protracted negotiations between Russia and Japan.

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English papers print a letter from Sir Wilfrid Laurier denying the statement that the government of Canada had intended to raise a great sum for imperial defence, but dropped it through Chamberlain's policy frightening the French Canadians.

Lloyd George, M. P., speaking at Paisley, said that there is not a single great industry whose production had not increased considerably out of proportion to the population. The only thing that had gone down was the hours of the laborer. Dumping was not killing the iron and steel trade, as last year they bought \$8,500,000 worth of half-manufactured steel from foreigners, which was dumped at a loss, and they exported steel to the value of £29,000,000.

The following is a copy of a cable received by Sir Wilfrid Laurier from Premier Seddon, of New Zealand: "Preferential bill has passed the House of Representatives by 50 to 16, and in legislative council no division. Practically unanimous, New Zealand has kept good faith and given its first installment preferential trade to Empire."

(Sgd) "Seddon."  
Until such time as details of bill have been received by the Dominion government, it will be impossible to say what trade concessions Canada will give in return, or whether the British reference will apply.

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