The Colonist.

THUSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1898.

REMEMBER SAN JUAN.

An esteemed caller said to the COLONIST yesterday: "Remember San Juan." Asked what he meant, he replied that the United States was permitted to land troops on that island, and the result was that Canada lost it. Something like this, he went on to say, might possibly happen if the United States should be allowed to send troops into the Yukon. It is perhaps some consideration of this kind that has led the Canadian government to refuse permission for an armed force to accompany the proposed relief expedition. We would not like to say that this expedition was only an excuse for getting an armed force into the country; but if it is to be abandoned, as is now alleged, there would seem to be some foundation for such a suggestion. No conditions exist that render it necessary for troops to be despatched to Alaska before the Yukon opens. We mean now to the interior of Alaska. If they did, and the troops could get there, some reason could be advanced for assenting to the proposal; but under the most favorable circumstances soldiers sent down the Yukon to Circle City would not reach there until June or about a month later than they could be sent in by way of St. Michael's. Nothing is likely to happen in that month calling for the presence of soldiers because every one will be getting ready to go to work or be actually at work.

In this connection a petition which has been sent to Washington from the people of Dyea and Skagway is worthy of comment. This petition calls for the proclamation of martial law at those points, and asks for a force of at least 300 soldiers to maintain order. If this is not done it is said there will be serious trouble before the season's rush is over. We are quite prepared to think that there is need for something of the kind; but suggest that the Canadian government should notify the Washington authorities that, while no objection will be raised to the presence of troops in what is disputed territory, it ought to be understood that any occupation by the United States government of the head of the Canal is not to be construed as a waiver by Canada of her rights there, in case it should be found that the locality ought to be a part of the Dominion under any fair interpretation of the treaty. It is as well to remember San Juan in this matter also.

JINGOISM RUN MAD.

We find in the Argonaut an article treating of the military spirit that is rampant in certain quarters of the United States. Our contemporary points out that during the past week the House of Representatives at Washington has been wrangling over intervention in Cuba and the Senate has been fighting over the annexation of Hawaii. The first means war; the latter large expenditure upon military and naval preparations, for it is evident that if the United States is to hold Hawaii, the towns must be fortified and garrisoned and a fleet must be available for the defence of the islands. The secretary of the navy wants the batteries of all the ships of war modernized; the chief of the bureau of ordnance wants all the 6-inch guns now in possession of the United States converted into rapid-firing weapons; the assistant secretary of the navy pleads for a larger navy; Senator Teller, of Colorado, cries out that Spain must be driven from Cuba, and that no one is a free man who refuses to fight to make her go; Representative Bailey, of Texas, exclaims in a fine frenzy: "A little blood-letting will do us good. We do not fear war." While all this is going on, the Argonaut says, "our coasts are undefended, our ships lack gunpowder for one day's battle, our arsenals are empty, we have few or no guns at the gates of our great cities, we have not enough men to work the guns we have."

This is certainly a striking arraignment. We are not discussing the policy of interference in the affairs of Cuba or the merits of Hawaiian annexation. Our reference is wholly to the extraordinary spirit of jingoism manifest in some quarters at Washington. To properly appreciate it, one must recall the fact that not a government in the world is exhibiting anything but the utmost friendliness towards the United States. No nation contemplates attacking the republic; no nation has anything to gain by a war with it. All that the nations ask is that the United States will refrain from interfering in their affairs. It is the most remarkable exhibition in the annals of politics.

NOT VERY NEIGHBORLY.

The plan adopted by the United States government for the purpose of solving difficulties in the transport of Canadian goods across the strip of country at the head of Lynn Canal is certainly not very neighborly. To propose that the owner of goods, after having paid the duties at the waterfront and carried them over the pass, should go all the way back again to get a refund shows either a disposition to put obstacles in the way of the entry of Canadian produce into Canada or else extreme ignorance of the situation. We were not aware that this was the way the matter was arranged when we commended the regulations as reasonable. The Canadian government can meet the exigencies of the case by appointing an officer at the frontier to cash the receipts and collect them later, and this we suppose will be done. In the case of goods sent through Canada to interior Alaska, the Canadian government will provide for the cashing of the receipts given by the collector at Tagish. It would have been a very easy matter for the regulation to have omitted to provide for this, and thus make it necessary for an American to plod back up the Yukon to Tagish to get his refund; but our government was hardly prepared for such a small piece of business.

We are inclined to think that the omission by the Secretary of the Treasury to provide for the refund of the money by an officer stationed at the conventional frontier was not due to any desire on his part to interfere with Canadians and persons carrying Canadian goods; but was simply a Smart Aleck trick devised by some too clever people, who will find their scheme recoil upon their own heads. The fact that a Canadian officer is at hand to cash the receipts will be a capital advertisement.

VICTORIA'S GOOD NAME.

Victoria is gaining a splendid name these days. Every man who comes here to buy goods goes away more than pleased at the manner in which he is received. He finds our merchants prompt to do business, and eager to get all the trade possible; but at the same time they are courteous, obliging and straightforward. The quality of the goods sold is excellent. Customers are met frankly, and told the truth, and prices are in all cases reasonable. Comparisons are proverbially odious, so we shall not make any in this matter. We will leave this part of the case to the miners who speak through our columns to our readers from day to day.

We feel that the business men of the city deserve the hearty congratulations of the citizens for the manner in which they are dealing with the outfitting trade. The good name they are earning for our city will be worth much in the future. It is impossible to fix a money value upon the reputation of a city for fair dealing, and this reputation Victoria is getting all over the world, for the men who come here represent all countries. It is pleasant to be able to write thus, and still more pleasant to do so with the consciousness that what we say will be fully endorsed by the men who are the best possible witnesses, namely, those who have come here as strangers to buy from men, whom they never saw before, for a journey about which they know very little. These men will come back here, and, what is more, when they tell how well they have been used here, those who feel that they have been robbed elsewhere will come to us when they have any more purchases to make. Honesty is better than the tactics of the Smart Aleck, even in the outfitting trade.

THE SCHOOL TRUSTEES AND THE CITY COUNCIL.

A question of considerable interest is raised by the letter of Mr. Jas. A. Raymur, city auditor, read at the meeting of the city council on Monday and printed in yesterday's COLONIST. It is as to the right of the auditor to pass upon the expediency of expenditures by the school board. This is not exactly the way it is raised, but substantially it comes to that. In effect the school board contends that the only duty of the auditor is to examine the accounts, and if they appear correct upon their face to certify to the statement. The auditor appears to hold that he is charged with the duty of examining into the nature of the several items, and that he may properly refuse to certify, if in his opinion some of the expenditures ought not to have been incurred. For example: It seems to be the rule of the board when it hires a teacher or other person not to recognize the broken parts of a month, when the term of hiring actually begins before the middle of the month, and when it begins after the middle of the month to begin payment at the middle. To this the auditor objects, and the question arises as to whether his objection shall prevail. The law on the subject of teachers' salaries is found in section 24 of the School Act, which reads as follows:

The salaries of the teachers employed in the public schools of Victoria, Vancouver, New Westminster and Nanaimo shall be fixed and paid at the discretion of the school trustees of the said cities respectively.

The trustees claim that this gives them discretion to say at what date a hiring shall be understood to begin, and even if that discretion seems to have been improperly exercised the auditor has no right to refuse his certificate to the accounts. It is obvious that such a claim cannot be admitted in its entirety, for in such a case the city might be called upon to sanction expenditures that are grossly improper. The word discretion does not mean whim, but what is known as a legal discretion, and it is obvious that if the auditor should find in the accounts sent to him to be certified a charge that was clearly irregular, it would be his duty to refuse to certify and report the same to the council. At the same time, we do not see how the auditor can set himself up as a court of appeal from the discretion of the school board. We think there is a difference in principle between two such cases as the following, namely, where the board pays a salary for a month, when in point of fact the person was not in its employ during that month, and where it pays a salary for a month, when the teacher has been in the employ of the board for only a part of a month, the custom being in such cases to pay for a whole month.

Mr. Raymur very properly thinks that his duty in the premises should be defined. Section 40 of the School Act says that "the City Council shall annually appoint an auditor to audit the accounts of the Board of Trustees." Mr. Raymur probably does not want to do anything more than he is required to do by law; but in order that he may do this, there must be a definition of what the law means by the words "to audit the accounts." If it only means that he shall see that the bookkeeping is correct and vouchers tally with the amounts, he cannot possibly be required to inquire into the nature and policy of the expenditures.

We concede that both bodies being elected by the people to discharge certain duties prescribed by law, there is no principle at stake in the matter. It is simply a question of interpretation of the statute. If the legislature has seen fit to say that the school board shall not be responsible to any one except the people for the manner in which the money for school purposes is expended, there is the end of the matter. If the intention of the legislature was that the auditor appointed by the city should exercise a supervision over the accounts of the board it is his duty to do so, and there is nothing more to be said.

In regard to one of the matters mentioned in Mr. Raymur's letter a few observations seem called for. He objected to the payment of Mr. Doran's salary for July on the ground that he resigned during the month, which was a holiday month. The board claims that this payment was obligatory upon it, under Article 4, Clause 1, of the Rules and Regulations prescribed by the government, which have the force of law. That regulation says:

Teachers on the permanent staff at the close of the school year (June 30th) who have been employed for more than half of the prescribed teaching days in the year, shall be paid their usual salaries for July.

It seems reasonable to hold that even though Mr. Doran resigned during July, he did so knowing that under the regulation he was entitled to his full salary for the month. The law of the land is a part of every transaction.

Perhaps the most serious question raised in connection with the affairs of the school board was that caused by the action of the mayor in drawing attention to the fact that the board asked for over $52,000 while the city had only $43,000 to give. In consequence of this the board was notified to reduce its estimates to the latter amount. This raises a point that must be disposed of sooner or later, and the present is as good a time as any for that purpose. The law on the point is found in Section 37 of the School Act and reads as follows:

The Board of Trustees shall, on or before the first day of February in each year, cause to be prepared and laid before the City Council, a detailed estimate of the sums required by the Board for the current year's ordinary expenses of maintaining the schools as they exist at the time of the making of such estimate, which sum shall be paid over from time to time as required upon the order of the trustees by the city treasurer to the several persons or corporations for whose use such moneys are payable.

The section then goes on to speak of special or extraordinary expenditures, the estimate of which is subject to alteration and approval by the council, and in the event of a refusal by the council a by-law must be submitted to the electors if the board shall so desire. It is claimed, and apparently with great force, that this section gives the board the right to say how much money shall be spent on the schools for ordinary expenditure, and that the council must find the money. At present there is no question about special expenditures involved. If the city shall refuse to pay the orders of the board, and by reason of non-payment a judgment is secured against the board, the city council must levy and collect the amount. Now, if the board has the exclusive right to make contracts and if on its failure to carry them out through lack of funds and judgment being recovered the city must pay, it would seem to follow that the city is bound to pay without the judgment being obtained. Hence if the board estimates that $52,000 is needed for ordinary school purposes, it seems as if the council has no alternative left but to find the money. We present these observations tentatively and in order that the matter may be fully discussed.

WHY is there so much more respect for law in Canada than in the United States, even in such remote localities as Alaska and the Yukon? The answer is that in Canada the laws are administered without fear or favor; while in the United States those charged with the duty of seeing that law is enforced fear the political influences of their acts, and are too much given to favoring influential friends. Permanency of office in the one case and short tenure in the other are doing their natural work. Of personal fearlessness there is quite as much among the judges and officers of the law in one country as in the other. The respective systems and their traditions produce good results in Canada and evil results in the United States.

THE Inland Sentinel says that the farmers and miners of the interior will have to pay interest upon a million dollars spent on the parliament buildings for many years to come. Will our contemporary take its pencil and figure out just how much of the interest on the $850,000 the buildings will cost any particular farmer and miner will have to pay? We do not think the farmers and miners of the interior will feel especially grateful to the Sentinel for suggesting that they are unwilling to pay their share towards seeing that the provincial legislature and the public departments are properly housed. If we may judge from what is said by the farmers and miners, who come to Victoria and express their views, we are warranted in concluding that they are perfectly satisfied that the province has no better buildings than it needs and that it got good value for its money.

THE Tacoma Ledger severely scores Seattle for its $500 license, which the deposed "Queen City of the Sound" expects will keep Victoria from disseminating correct information about the Yukon within its limits. It calls the ordinance "a fool proposition," "a confession of weakness" and something "calculated to provoke retaliation." It is all that the Ledger says of it, yet we are glad it was adopted. We are glad to know that Seattle has been compelled to acknowledge in such a conspicuous way her inability to compete with Victoria. This is a pretty position for a city of such pretensions to be placed in. It is the worst blow the credit and the enterprise of the place ever received. We do not wonder that the Ledger ridicules the ordinance. It will be ridiculed from one end of America to another.

WE shall send, perhaps, a copy of las night's Times to the Contemporary Review, which will be, no doubt, delighted to know that the word Mithraicism does not meet the approval of so high an authority. The article in Sunday's COLONIST was suggested by one in the Contemporary, wherein reference was made to Mithraicism as the origin of certain religious forms. This led the writer of the COLONIST article to look the subject up, and a part of the result of his search was the article in which the word Mithraicism occurred, which was not invented by the COLONIST, nor yet by the Review writer, but can be found in various articles upon this very interesting subject.

A RECENT despatch says that Russia is about to make overtures to the United States to secure the moral support of that country in the event of its becoming necessary to oppose, by force, the determination of Great Britain and Japan to keep the ports of the Orient open to the commerce of the world. We have no reason to expect very much wisdom from Washington, when it comes to international politics, but think there will be so strong a pressure from all sides that the administration will take sides with Great Britain in this affair, if it ever comes to a head.

THE Tacoma Ledger thinks the statement of the COLONIST, that very little more provocation would cause the Dominion to close the mines of the Yukon to aliens, hysterical. That is where our contemporary makes a mistake. The COLONIST's statement was based upon a knowledge of the situation. It was not intended as an expression of ill-will, but as a notice to our neighbors as to what they might have expected if their government had not been more reasonable than some of their newspapers, the Ledger not included.

CLEAR and cold weather and fine ice is the report from the Stikine river. It has been said that if there is much travel on the river the road will be broken up. This seems like an odd statement. Most people, who are familiar with ice travelling, will bear us out in saying that the roadway is usually the last part of the ice to break up. It gets solidified by constant travel, and is invariably stronger than any other part of the surface.

IT has been a long time since a lieutenant-governorship went begging as that of the Northwest Territories is going. What's the matter? When did it come to pass that there could not be found in all the ranks of the amiable Grits a gentleman so self-sacrificing as to be willing to take that by no means unlucrative or uninteresting position? Verily, we have fallen upon strange times. "Laurier's luck" seems to have deserted him.

THE Seattle Times questions the honesty of Captain Ray, whose alarming report from Circle City was recently given to the press, and thinks he may have been acting in the interest of the great trading corporations. The Times says that not an army officer on the Coast believes him worthy of belief.

THE COLONIST congratulates the Seattle Times upon the new evidence it furnishes of its prosperity. The Times is an excellent newspaper and deserves the popularity which it enjoys.

IT was Ottawa last week. It is London to-day. It will be Victoria on Thursday. If this keeps up, speeches from the throne, like Britain's morning drumbeat, will encircle the world.

AND so Victoria is to have new telegraphic connection with the Mainland by April 15th. Well, we can all stand it.

IN order to carry their respective points, it is said that those United States senators who favor the annexation of Hawaii and those who favor the recognition of Cuban belligerency, have agreed to unite their forces and pass a single resolution favoring both schemes. It seems hardly credible that so unseemly a thing could be done even in the United States senate, and perhaps the story is only one of those sensations that ingenious Washington correspondents invent from time to time. It is interesting to note in this connection that there is considerable fear manifest in Madrid of some step being taken by the United States that may precipitate trouble.

THERE is a report that Russia, Germany and France propose to take the side of Spain in case of any difficulty arising over Cuba, but that Great Britain refuses to commit herself to their plans. We have no particular reason in Canada to feel kindly towards the United States, but if any European combination endeavors to crush that country, we will forget all our little differences and join the Motherland in saying that the men who speak the English language and maintain the institutions that have their foundation in the Common Law shall not stand alone in the contest.

WE do not want to interfere in the administration of justice, but, in view of the fact that many desperadoes are likely to visit this city in the near future, cannot forbear expressing the hope that in cases of crime, where the evidence is abundantly clear, the accused should receive the maximum punishment provided. If he behaves himself in prison his term can be shortened. What we want to see is crime prevented by a few good wholesome lessons at the outset.

THE Nanaimo Review is very severe upon the Chief Justice because the latter, when Attorney-General, framed a law which he now says is inoperative. If the Review were a little more familiar with the history of legislation it would know that frequently judges have to decide against opinions expressed by them while at the bar. It is only given to newspaper editors to be absolutely infallible at all times.

The Post-Intelligencer says that a Canadian gold commissioner at Lake Bennett will issue timber licenses, and doubtless will be able to issue mining licenses. We doubt the whole statement. The latter part of it is certainly untrue; for the regulations, which are the law, say that licenses can only be obtained in the Yukon territory at Dawson City.

NOW THAT the Stikine-Teslin railway bill is before the house, we hope it will be put through in the quickest possible time. If it is to be passed, it ought to be passed just as soon as the discussion of its details can be disposed of. If it is to be rejected, the fact ought to be made known without delay, so that people can govern themselves accordingly.

THE Queen's speech from the throne is very pacific in tone; but the habit of ministers nowadays is not to tell anything more than they are compelled to on such occasions.

THE government should bring on the elections as soon as possible or a certain journalistic candidate for legislative honors in the interior will have the cost of the parliament building rolled up to $50,000,000.

THE CANADIAN PRESS.

COAL MINERS' WAGES.

In our news columns will be found the particulars of the ten per cent. advance which has recently been accorded by Messrs. R. Dunsmuir & Sons to all their underground employees in the Wellington collieries. We have also endeavored to make a comparison between the wages paid here and at Nanaimo from time to time. This comparison throws a most favorable light upon the treatment of their employees by this company, and one too with which the men have every reason to be satisfied.—Wellington Enterprise.

CANADA AND IMPERIAL DEFENCE.

She is the natural keeper, in the first instance, of several points of importance on our "far flung battle line"; and, if she spends what she can afford on making these more secure, she will be doing the Empire good service. It is not difficult to imagine circumstances in which the termini of the Canadian Pacific at New Westminster and Vancouver would be points of the first importance. The same thing is true of the coal stores at Nanaimo. It seems to us that defensive works at these points cannot be undertaken too soon.—Columbian.

THE FIERY DEMON.

The recent fatal fire in Spokane should be a warning to those in New Denver who are sleeping in five story blocks. We would advise them to sleep nearer terra firma. It is much more pleasant, but less exciting in case the fiery demon takes a notion to paint the scenery a lurid tint.—Denver Ledge.

BY WAY OF VARIETY.

Hicks—You know that Gray has been going about with Miss Klondike a good deal. He and his people have been making all sorts of inquiries regarding old Klondike's resources. It really looks like an engagement.

Wicks—I should say rather that it looks like a reconnaissance in force.—Boston Transcript.

When Renand first went as senator to Paris he engaged a room at a hotel and paid a month's rent—150 francs—in advance. The proprietor asked if he would have a receipt. "It is not necessary," replied Renaud; "God has witnessed the payment." "Do you believe in God?" sneered the host. "Most assuredly!" replied Renaud; "don't you?" "Not I, monsieur." "Ah," said the Senator, "I will take a receipt, if you please."—San Francisco Argonaut.

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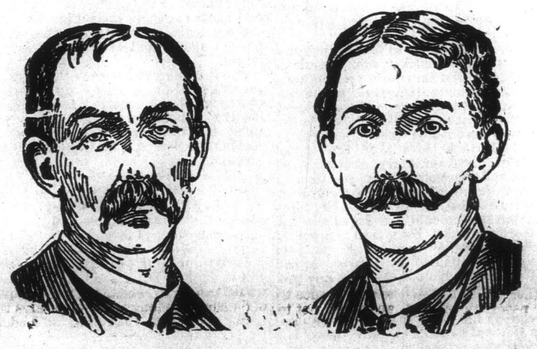

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It requires two kinds of capital to make this venture. The man who goes through must have strength and nerve as well as money. Money will not carry you through the long weeks of exposure to cold and hardship. Strength will count then. There will be stragglers left behind; poor, weak constitutions will give out and the hardy, well-developed man is sure to win.

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LONDON, Feb. 5.—The the principal passages o made last night at Leeds b Balfour, a short report o cabled last evening: "Ru picions have been given cu effect that the government from the firm position it the Chinese question, t abandoning the principles had given public utterance, brave words of the ministe a preparation to surrende I can say with confidenc rumors, which have been a in quarters where one thought more confidence been placed in the wisdom of Her Majesty's advisers, foundation. (Loud chee not true that the govern in the smallest particula from their declared policy East, or that they have, in of pressure from any other po any of our just claims. T ations which govern that been stated clearly to the pu than one cabinet minister declarations the governmen Mr. Balfour recalled the made by his brother, Mr. A four, first lord of the treasury cent speech at Manchester, statements he reasserted wit He declared that the governm desire to possess any of Chin except such points as might b for strategical purposes. To nese territory would simply b an immense additional burd corresponding advantage. Gre treaty rights secured equality nity for trade and she could note if she assumed charge of a hu lion Chinamen. Continuing, four said: "So long as our tr are protected, and so long as t ment make no conditions by w rights would be jeopardized, government are entitled to dence of the nation, and so l lieve, they will retain that (Cheers.) As to the negotiati on in connection with the loan am not in possession of any I cannot impart any, but I hop lic will realize that the effect ture criticism is only to emb minister of foreign affairs and the difficulty of his task."

Mr. Balfour urged the publi vate a wholesale scepticism o authorized statements with re the negotiations, and above make any inference from the the statements made by newsp neither denied nor affirmed by isters. "Negotiations of this declared, "are necessarily of and critical character, and to firm or deny unauthorized st that may appear would necess duce a false impression. The therefore, of the ministers on ject is not to be taken as af denying what is said. The tim yet come for statements conce negotiations which have taken are still taking place. In the I am sure you will rest satisfie assurance, which I now repeat, not the intention of the minis cede in any way from the decl policy they have made."

The Daily News (Liberal) co on Mr. Balfour's address says whether the speech, which wa ed in the tones of a schoolmast ing more in sorrow than in a be successful in allaying the of the government's supporters on its merits it was sensible The paper adds: "The distru Tories of their heaven-sent fo retary seems too firmly plant shaken by mere scoldings."

The Standard (Conservativ appeased by Mr. Balfour's sp again appeals to Lord Salisbur the nation into his confidence clares it is confident that go than harm will result therefr paper contends that when ment meets the governme pressed for the facts, and more hindrance will be c piecemeal interrogation an evasion, than by a business-lik tion of the proposition. The evidently fears that the gove hedging with the different tions that are based upon it policy. It says: "What t wants is not so much a minute of what has passed at the which the Tsungli Yamen hel government, as a statement of in which Lord Salisbury under principle formulated by the m the cabinet."

The Times dismisses the sp a brief allusion declaring that four does not throw much ne the subject.

LONDON, Feb. 5.—It is prol but little further reliable in regarding China will be obt the ministers have a chance t their assailants during the co debate in parliament on the reply to the speech from t Great Britain has never dem Talienwan be made a treat was merely one of the sugg stituents of the bargain, and be withdrawn it can only be is a barrier to the negotiation loan. The object of the con to check the scheme for the t tion of Port Arthur into a c sian port and the object w secured by exacting from Russia together a pled them in regard to Korea. Th evacuation of Port Hamilton and this will probably be th The semi-official statements p to, notably, the specific assur