

The Colonist.

MONDAY, MAY 2, 1898.

DEVELOPMENT ON OMINECA.

The bill to incorporate the Cariboo-Omineca Chartered company, which was brought down to the house on Thursday by a message from the Lieutenant-Governor, is of very considerable interest, although it asks very little of the legislature. By it some London people seek incorporation to operate steamboats on British Columbia waters, to engage in mining and smelting, to operate railways, trams, stage lines, telegraph and telephone lines and generally to do anything in connection with the different kinds of business just mentioned. The company is also to carry out a certain provisional contract made with the provincial government. This contract requires the company to establish and maintain during the season of navigation in 1898, 1899 and 1900 regular steamboat communication between Quesnelmouth and North Tlacla lake, or if it fails to have arrangements complete in time to operate during the season of 1898, the company must make up the difference by operating during the season of 1901. That is, the company undertakes to run steamboats over the route named during three seasons. The company must make any improvements necessary to render the navigation of the waters mentioned possible, to keep exploration parties in the field during the summer of 1898, 1899 and 1900 in Cariboo, Omineca, Cassiar and to furnish the government with full reports of the work done at the close of each season; to explore the north fork of the Fraser as far as the Giscombe Portage and to improve the portage and maintain suitable steamboat accommodation on this part of the Fraser for three years. They are given no monopoly, and any one else is at perfect liberty to put steamboats on the same rivers just as if the agreement had never been made. The only concession to the company is of the right to do, as a company, what individual members of the organization could do, namely, to purchase six blocks of land of not less than three hundred and twenty nor more than six hundred and forty acres each at such points as the company may select along the rivers. The price to be paid for the land is \$1 per acre. The company is also authorized to take such lumber, stone and gravel from Crown lands as may be needed in connection with the undertakings authorized by the contract.

It will be observed that there is nothing in the powers proposed to be given to the company, which private individuals acting as a syndicate might not do, except the provision last mentioned. Any private individual has a perfect right to select land and buy it under the terms of the law, although in the case of a purchase by an individual the price would depend upon the quality of the land. If the land selected were all of the first class the area which the company is authorized to buy would come to \$19,200, while the total price under the agreement will not exceed \$3,540. The possible difference, which might in point of fact be no difference at all, for the land selected might all be of third grade, with the permission to take material from Crown lands under the direction of the Chief Commissioner, is the only advantage which the company will have over the right possessed by every person now resident in the province. It is a very small consideration for the work of direct advantage to the province, that the company engages to do.

It may be asked of what benefit such privileges are to a company. The answer is that the promoters of the company are satisfied to make the contract with the government above mentioned and doubtless have examined the matter very fully. It is not difficult to see how it may be of very considerable value to have such a contract. The company proposes to engage in transportation on the interior waters of the province. Its promoters evidently have in view six points, where they believe towns will grow up. These will be the stations, so to speak, on their traffic line. They desire to be in a position to say to those persons who will put their money into the steamboats and the improvement of the navigation; that they will be able to look not only to the earning capacity of the steamboats for profit, but to the sale of business and residence sites at six of the chief points where the steamboats will stop. There is nothing to prevent any one else from doing the very same thing without an act of the legislature, but he would have to do so in his private and individual capacity.

A description of the waters to which the company's operations will extend will be both timely and interesting. The distances given are approximate. Quesnelmouth, as it ought to be called for the sake of brevity, Quesnel, is 220 miles from Ashcroft on the Canadian Pacific and 231 miles from the head of the Bute Inlet on the Coast. It is almost due west of Barkerville. It is at the junction of the Quesnelle with the Fraser. From this point to the mouth of the Nechaco the distance is 70 miles by way of the Fraser. It is said that the expenditure of a few thousand dollars will make steamboat navigation possible between these points. The Nechaco is a considerable river flowing east from Fraser lake. Its course lies along the 54th parallel. The distance from Fraser lake to the junction of the Nechaco with the Fraser is 75 miles. About midway of this distance the Stuart river joins the Nechaco, flowing from Stewart lake which lies to the northwest. The distance to the lake from the Nechaco is 50 miles. The lake is 85 miles long. About 80 miles from the southern extremity of the lake Thatcher river joins it. This stream flows from Tremblay lake. It is about 10 miles long. From the opposite side of the lake,

here about three miles wide, a route to the northwest is afforded by Middle river, 15 miles long, flowing out of North Tlacla lake, a body of water 60 miles long, a little to the eastward of which, and separated from it by a range of hills that afford no obstacle to travel, are Germanen, Manson and the other creeks that have made Omineca famous. It is said that an expenditure of \$30,000 will render steamboat navigation possible from Quesnel to the head of North Tlacla lake, that is to within a few miles of the gold fields just mentioned, and that, at any rate, it would pay to build around any stretches of water which might prove to be too expensive to improve. The above approximations make the distance to the point where the short overland journey to the Omineca creeks would begin 265 miles.

The company also agrees to explore the North Fork of the Fraser and improve the Giscombe Portage. From the mouth of the Nechaco up the North Fork the Portage the distance is 30 miles. The Portage is 5 miles long and goes to Summit Lake, the source of the Crooked river, a branch of the smaller township being called the Peace river, after it passes through the Rocky Mountains. It will thus be seen that the proposed operations of the Cariboo and Omineca Chartered Company will provide means of communication during the summer to a great region, now little known, only partially explored and of very great promise. We think it will be conceded that the province is asked to do very little to encourage the company to embark in this venture, which is based upon confidence in the great resources of Omineca and the vast Cassiar country beyond. The work of the company will be of the greatest advantage to Ashcroft and the surrounding district, which will become more important than ever through the trade certain to be developed with the region thus to be opened for travel.

The Post-Intelligencer is annoyed because the Victoria papers have referred to the possibility of steamers under the United States flag in the North Pacific being seized by Spaniards. It says there will be no Spanish vessels in the North Pacific. What is the use of talking such nonsense? The United States is at war with Spain and anything may be expected in the way of seizures at sea. Victoria people have no desire to see any vessels belonging to the United States captured, but they would not be doing their duty if they did not draw the attention of the travelling public to the possibility of such a thing happening. It is also quite true that Spanish cruisers would not confiscate the property of neutrals in American bottoms. They would probably content themselves with landing the neutrals and their belongings in some convenient place, but the difference between this and confiscation to a man on the way to the Yukon would be more nominal than real.

We print a letter from the official stenographer in the Doyce case showing just what Judge Irving did say to the prisoner. It is very clear that the Judge only intended to convey the impression that he would not add to the terrible sentence by employing any more words than were absolutely necessary. It will be noted that the Judge spoke of the sentence as that "of the court." As the Colonist said yesterday, this is an error. No man in this country can impose a sentence of death. The Judge has no discretion. It is "the sentence of the law" for murder.

THE RAILWAY TO THE NORTH.

We learn that, in accordance with the announcement made some days ago in these columns, the government of the province has perfected its plan to secure the construction of a railway from Teslin Lake to the British Columbia coast, and that the necessary measure will be brought down to the house early this week. We believe the plan adopted will meet with the approval of the very great majority of the people of British Columbia. It is unnecessary to add anything to what we have already said as to the importance of the proposed railway. Its construction will mark an era in the history of the province. The beginning of construction will give a stimulus to business and inaugurate a period of prosperity which has had no parallel in the history of the Coast region. We hope to see the measure receive support from gentlemen who do not usually act with the government. There is no division between parties on this question out of the house and there should not be one within it.

PARTY LINES IN PROVINCIAL POLITICS.

A disposition has been shown in some quarters to divide provincial politics on Dominion lines. This has been principally exhibited by certain Liberals, but probably the Conservatives have not been quite free from it. The idea has met with no favor from the provincial administration, and we are glad to know that the recognized leaders of the opposition have disavowed it. The suggestion has also been made that an avowedly coalition party should be formed in the province, but this is scarcely less objectionable. A coalition is simply a temporary expedient to meet an emergency. It presupposes that party lines may be properly taken into account in the local field, and that when either party feels able to take the reins in its own hands, the other will be cast out, and thereafter strict party lines be drawn. No such emergency exists in this province, nor can it exist for the very good reason, if for no other, that there are no local issues upon which the people are divided according to Dominion lines. There may well be, and we are glad to believe there is, a unity of intention among the majority of the supporters of both the great Dominion parties to secure good government for British Colum-

bia by bringing about the return of Hon. Mr. Turner to power; but this union is not a coalition of representatives of two opposing parties but an alliance between men, who, differing on federal issues, see alike as to what is necessary for the best interests of the province in the conduct of its local affairs. The distinction is a real one and if it is kept in mind the work of the coming campaign will be greatly simplified. We repeat that to talk of a coalition of federal parties in provincial politics is to admit that federal politics have a place in provincial affairs—a position which we think no well-wisher of British Columbia ought to assume.

It has been said that in most of the older provinces party lines are followed in the local houses. We do not know that this proves any thing, and it remains to be demonstrated that the provinces, where this rule prevails, are any better off by reason of it than New Brunswick and British Columbia where it is not observed. It might also be pointed out that in the United States the rule is to carry federal politics down even to the consideration of the smallest township. So completely is this done that the whole political organization of the country, from the President down, is a huge party machine, or rather two or three huge party machines, which are as remorseless in their operation as any other machinery. Public interests of the most vital character are crushed out of life by the juggernaut of party exigency. We do not want that sort of thing in British Columbia, but we could not avoid having it if we deliberately recognized federal party distinctions as entitled to consideration in provincial affairs. The older provinces do not present conditions similar to ours, but in none of them were local politics deliberately divided on federal lines. In Ontario and Quebec we have simply a continuation of what existed prior to confederation, and we are not prepared to concede that its continuance has been beneficial. It certainly has not been so in Quebec, which province has suffered severely in credit and administration because it has been the battle ground of forces contending for supremacy in the Dominion. The result of the recent elections in Ontario, taken in connection with the repeated Conservative majorities in the Commons contemporaneous with Liberal majorities in the provincial legislatures, show that party lines did not reach as deeply below the surface in local matters in that province, as was generally supposed. In Nova Scotia, party lines were drawn at the time of confederation and have remained the same ever since. The case of New Brunswick is cited as that of a province where the local government is a coalition. This is a mistake. To apply the word coalition to New Brunswick is a complete misnomer. Two events have taken place in New Brunswick. The first was the confederation issue; the second was the school question. The lines upon which the politics of that province are conducted were drawn during the premiership of George E. King, now Mr. Justice King, of the Supreme court of Canada. The movement, which culminated in the change of government in 1883, was started by some of the younger men who thought that it was time they had something to say in affairs, and when victory was at last won the new government was formed out of the house without respect to Dominion lines, the selection of the cabinet being governed by two considerations, the fitness of the men and their strength in their respective constituencies. There never was anything resembling a coalition. We have gone a little into particulars on this point, because we know that some people in this province talk about a coalition after what they call the New Brunswick pattern. The fact of the matter is, if one looks below the surface, he will see that such a province has been in these matters a law unto itself, which must necessarily be the case, because the conditions existing in the different provinces are diverse.

Referring particularly to our own province, we desire to point out that there are no lines of cleavage in affairs, which will be parallel to those in the Dominion arena, and therefore any scheme which subordinates the former to the latter is indefensible on the ground of public policy. The issues with which parliamentary deals are very distinct from those that come within the purview of the local house, and to attempt to manage them as one would inevitably lead to the provincial government becoming on a par with the Dominion government, or, if one looks to one of the other of the federal parties. We need hardly say that the interests of British Columbia are great enough, varied enough and call for sufficient ability to properly safeguard them, to make it undesirable, from any point of view, that their treatment should be hampered by the exigencies of Dominion politics. In the other provinces these exigencies have led to the sacrifice of provincial interests on more than one occasion, and we protest that this province cannot afford at such a critical period of its future as now at hand to have its future jeopardized by confusing matters so distinct in their nature as are the issues in the federal and local arenas.

Moreover from time to time questions will constantly arise between the province and the Dominion. It might be of advantage to have on such occasions a local ministry in sympathy with that at Ottawa, but this is doubtful, for while such friendship might incline the federal authorities to assent to the views of the local government to strengthen their hands, it might also lead the provincial executive to yield to the wishes of the Ottawa ministry. It is certainly not desirable that the government of this province should be avowedly hostile to any federal ministry. British Columbia is a growing province. No matter what party may be in power at Ottawa there will be many things to be adjusted be-

tween the Dominion and the province, many concessions to be sought, many things in which concerted action will be necessary. It has been so throughout the quarter of a century and more during which the province has been in confederation, and as during that long period it was never felt to be desirable to set up a federal line of demarcation, so we do not think it desirable now. Progress and good government are a sufficient platform for any party in British Columbia politics, and the loyalty of no man to his federal leaders will be the least impaired by his taking his stand upon it.

We think the soundness of the above position will be conceded by the very great majority of the people of British Columbia, and that the determination of the government to ignore federal party lines wholly in the forthcoming elections, and to base its appeal to all voters upon its record of administration and general policy will command all but universal approval. Mr. Turner and his associates realize that to do their duty by the province, the management of whose affairs has been committed to their hands, is a work calling for all their energy and administrative skill at their command, and they have no desire or intention to subordinate their trust or to permit it to be subordinated to the welfare of either party at Ottawa. If this determination means political defeat, they will have the satisfaction of knowing they will have done their duty in keeping the province free from political entanglements, resulting from the adoption of a policy that is indefensible in principle and mischievous in practice.

The "war news" is not of a particularly agitating character. It looks so far like a case of "one's afraid and the other daren't." There is perhaps more than a little truth in this; by which we do not mean that either side is lacking in courage, for the records of both countries show their people to be full of pluck, but simply that the naval forces of both combatants are so evenly balanced that neither is in a hurry to risk the chances of an engagement except under the most favorable conditions. A sea fight between modern ironclads, manned by men who know how to fight them, is an experiment of the most serious character, and while we wise people who have no responsibility in the matter, may think we know exactly what ought to be done, we would probably find it much more difficult to decide if we had the decision to make.

It would be interesting to know why the British war vessels on the Asiatic station have been ordered not to make any repairs. The only explanation possible is that the admiralty expects the squadron's services will be needed at an early day. As there is not the slightest reason to suppose that Great Britain will interfere between the United States and Spain, the thought naturally suggests itself that the interference of some European power is looked for. Possibly Germany may contemplate something of the kind. The Kaiser might regard the cession of the Philippines to Germany as a fair equivalent for helping Spain retain Cuba. Great Britain would not submit to any deal of that kind. If the orders to the fleet are not in connection with some such movement, it is hard to understand why they were given.

The failure of the proposal to compel all aliens, who desire to take out mining licenses, to declare their intention of becoming British subjects has not called forth any expressions of regret. Public opinion is evidently not ready for such a step.

Some people are prophesying \$2.00 wheat before the year is out. It will take more than war between the United States and Spain to put wheat at that figure.

The omission of Germany and Austria to issue proclamations of neutrality is remarkably, because such a course is extremely unusual.

Present indications are that the present session at Ottawa will be singularly barren of important legislation.

What about that government shipment of goods to the Yukon via Seattle? Will Hon. Mr. Sifton explain?

BY WAY OF VARIETY.
"I'm willing George should help capture Havana, but I won't have him going to Spain."
"Why not?"
"Spain is where that Carmen came from."
"Cleveland Plain Dealer."
"He never comes near me since I lent him \$2."
"Cheap enough."—Chicago Record.

"What would you advise a fellow to do who is bound to go on the stage, and who can't act any more than a cow?"
"Tell him to go to Chicago and join a live stock company."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

"Albert, dear, while looking through some of your old clothes, I made such a lucky find that I ordered a new dress on the strength of it."
"What was it, dear?"
"Half a dozen checks that had never been written on."—Brooklyn Life.

Ferry—The Daily Blow is doing great editorial work these days. Its editorial pens seem to be dipped in vitriol.

Wallace—And what a pity it is that the news of the war is dipped in lie.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Judge—Now sir, if you have any excuse for having kicked the prosecuting witness I shall be pleased to hear from you.
Prisoner—Your Honor, I asked him, merely by way of a pleasant jest, to name off some of the Vice-Presidents of the United States—and he went and did it.—Indianapolis Journal.



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NOTHING

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Preparations From San Francisco

European Conspires Ma

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