

NEWS OF THE PROVINCE.

Another Challenge from McLean—The Preliminary Meeting of the Royal Fisheries Commission.

Doings at Nelson—Remarkable Signs of Activity in the Mining Camps.

VANCOUVER.

VANCOUVER, Feb. 19.—George Munroe, read master, Kamloops, North Division Canada Pacific, arrived here to-day, looking after the work to be done on that branch of the railroad.

The case of Powis vs. the Michigan Lumber Company, came up to-day. The judge decides that Powis was entitled to what he sued for.

The court of revision met to-day and made a general revision of claims.

An examination into the alleged case of Chinese leprosy proved the report to be without foundation. The doctor who examined the girl said she was affected, but although she is in one of the lowest Chinese dives in the city, she has not leprosy.

The Imperial Federation League have arranged for a series of lectures during the week and the distribution of league literature.

The American barque Hesper finished loading lumber and was towed into the wharf. She has 900,000 feet of lumber for Hong Kong.

The Alhambra hotel has been sold to Messrs. McKinnon and Macdonald.

A large number of persons went up to the Mission this afternoon to attend the ball at the opening of the new hotel there.

A letter has been received from the City Clerk of Victoria stating that the Chinaman who was sent from Vancouver to Darcy Island maintains that he is not a leper, and demands that a doctor be sent down.

The matter came before the Health Commissioner, and it was recommended that Dr. Bell-Living and the chairman, Dr. McGuigan, go down to make another examination.

VANCOUVER, Feb. 20.—Colquhoun, the man missing two weeks ago and supposed to have been murdered, has been found.

Christ Church has been standing in an uncompleted condition for two years. The congregation has decided to go on at once and finish, at a cost of \$24,000.

A large number of persons are refusing to pay the poll tax. The authorities are at their wits' end to devise some means to bring them to time.

The finance committee met this morning, and arranged to begin at once the construction of the market sheds.

NEW WESTMINSTER.

NEW WESTMINSTER, Feb. 19.—The Vancouver and Westminster Association football team plays a match on Queen's Park, to-morrow.

The Oddfellows of Surrey are about to build a handsome hall, for their use, at Cloverdale. The building has only been organized a couple of months, but has a membership of fifty-five.

The people of Surrey and Cloverdale are wondering when they will get a reply to their petition, signed by 250 persons, forwarded to the Post Office Department, asking for a daily mail service between Westminster and Cloverdale. An increased service is badly wanted.

Harry Trim, of Westham Island reports that the farmers in his neighborhood have nearly all finished ploughing and are waiting for April to commence seeding and planting.

Thomas Shannon, Cloverdale, says the farmers of Surrey are well advanced with their spring work, and ploughing is nearly finished in the vicinity of Chilliwack. W. Bell, says ploughing has been going on steadily for some time, and if the weather is favorable, seeding will be finished this year, at a much earlier date than usual.

At a meeting of the new Queenborough club the following officers for the ensuing year were elected: President, Mr. F. M. O'Brien; Vice-Presidents, Rev. H. Irwin and Mr. Justinian Pelly; Trustees, Mayor Townsend, Messrs. W. J. Walker, J. E. Phillips, G. A. Scully, J. H. Scully, J. H. Manning, a committee, Messrs. Springer, McBride, Homer, Jones and Innis.

Alex. McLean, the organist, issues the following challenge to organists: "I, Alex. McLean, hereby challenge any man in the province, or resident in the Puget Sound territory, to row a race in best and best racing skills, three miles with turn, for any sum ranging from \$500 to \$2,000. The race will be rowed within sixty days from date. The terms are to be arranged within three weeks; the course, conditions, and other details to be agreed by agreement. The whole amount of the stakes is to be deposited in the Columbian office, Westminster, ten days after signing the agreement. I also challenge any man in the province to paddle a canoe race, in best and best canoe, three to five miles; stakes, from \$100 to \$300 a side. Conditions as above. (Signed) A. McLean."

The first meeting of the Royal Commission to enquire into the salmon fisheries of the Fraser River, was held this afternoon. The Commission is composed of Messrs. Samuel Wilcox, Dominion superintendent of fish culture, Hon. D. W. Higgins, Victoria, and Sheriff Armstrong, of this city. Hon. D. W. Higgins, speaker of the Provincial Legislature, arrived in the city this morning. He is the connecting link of the Royal Fisheries Commission. It was owing to that gentleman not being able to duplicate himself at Victoria and Westminster at the same time that the sessions of the commission have been delayed. At 2 o'clock the commissioners met for a preliminary sitting to arrange a programme for the regular sittings. It was decided to hold the first session this evening, commencing at 8 o'clock, a number of canny men being anxious to give their testimony, and get home without further loss of time. The commissioners will take every word of evidence which can be obtained from any reliable source.

NANAIMO.

NANAIMO, Feb. 19.—W. Hewatson, manager of the Alberni Paper Mills, left for Alberni, to-day. He says the machinery for the paper mill goes up next week. The machinery for the saw mill, to be run in connection with the paper mill, is expected to arrive. He also stated that he has no doubts very confidently of the prospects of Alberni.

The Knights of Pythias ball at Comox came off last night, and was a great success. Over one hundred couples were present.

Mr. Bushell, the temperance lecturer has organized a lodge of Good Templars at Comox. He also stated that he has no doubts very confidently of the prospects of Alberni.

NANAIMO, Feb. 20.—It is reported that the whaleback steamer "Chas. W. Wetmore," chartered by Rosenfeld & Sons,

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The first witness called was William Costigan, who had been five years fishing upon the Fraser river. He had applied for a license but was refused one. He applied to Mr. Mowat when he was inspector, and this year had applied to Mr. McNab. No reason had been given him why he could not be licensed. There were fishermen on the river who bought licenses for \$50 apiece. Witness could not state their names. He thought Ross was the name of one man. Ross lived at Port Moody. Grant, a fisheries officer, had obtained a license and sold it for \$30 to Peter Nelson. Witness considered that was a poor man, especially during a bad season. He thought that twenty licenses granted to the cannerymen was about right.

Peter Nelson, the person alluded to in the testimony of the former witness, stated that it was not from Grant but from John Wagner that he purchased the fishing license. Grant had sold the license to Peter Nelson. He had thrown into the river had no injurious effect upon the salmon run. Offal had sometimes got into his net and damaged it. The bad odor from the offal might prevent the fish from entering the river. The size of fish caught by the witness averaged six pounds. A six-inch net was used; it was 40 meshes deep. In July, last year, witness had caught 1,100 in one day. The fish were in great abundance at the mouth of the river. It was at that point that most of the fishing was done.

John Kjekovic, a Swedish Finn, who has been in this country several years, says he worked for Ewen. He had used of their fishing tackle and got ten cents for each fish he caught. Witness was charged \$10 for the loan of the fishing boat. He understood that cannerymen English and Todd only got the men employed by them 60 cents a fish. A fish was valued at 20 cents, last season. Witness stated that it was the general impression that several of the cannerymen, this year, were going to import Japanese labor in fishing. The Japanese would work cheaper than the white men. Witness complained that he had come to British Columbia under the representation contained in a pamphlet which he had received from Ottawa. Although he had applied for a license for the fishing boat, he had not taken the oath of allegiance, had been refused one. Witness stated that there were many men who got licenses; "and did not wish them"—"and he put 'em." They sold their fishing privileges. The name of John Ross, Sea Island, was mentioned in the witness's evidence. He had caught 3,000 fish, last season. The fish were worth 20 cents each. That would make \$600. Witness only got \$300; the cannerymen had the other \$300. He did not get a license which would only cost \$20, and in consequence had to pay \$300 to the cannerymen for fishing privileges. Witness stated that he had not seen any other fishermen. They were not fishermen; but dealers in fish.

Cross-examined, witness said the cost of the fishing outfit supplied him amounted to \$140.

Madison, a Dane, gave evidence of not being able to secure a license.

John McGlashan, a Scotchman, had been in the country several years, and was in the Dominion Government Agent, who had told him that anyone could fish in British Columbia; no license being required; he could not get a license. He had been in the industry in which witness was working, there were only ten white people, out of 100 employees; Chinamen and Siwash were numerously employed. Foremen and girls were gaged at the cannery. Witness knew a man named Fred Kaye, who held two or three licenses, and who sold them.

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Bernard Puck stated that if more licenses were granted the cannerymen, the fishermen would be driven out of the fishing occupation; the cannerymen would not buy from them. They would obtain foreign labor, at a cheaper rate.

J. E. Lord said the fisheries hatchery should be removed from its present site near New Westminster close to the spawning ground at Harlow's Spring salmon at well as sockeyes should be propagated. Witness knew saloon-keepers in Vancouver who held fishing licenses. Licenses were given to Italian and other foreigners who lived on scows upon the river and paid no taxes. Twenty Americans regularly came to the Fraser river and fished every season. British subjects could not get licenses. Offal deposits were no detriment either to man or fish unless deposited in shallow, still water.

Frederick Kaye advocated a Sunday close season; there should also be an annual close season. Witness did not think the fish on the Fraser had decreased; the offal thrown into the river did not affect the fish. He should have the right to fish. The cannerymen were thrown into the river, in a few hours it would be eaten by the fish. Witness favored a system of free licenses; a farmer should have the right to fish. The cannerymen's own use; the free license should only be granted to British subjects.

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CAPITAL NOTES.

A Stone Beacon, With Electric Light, to Be Placed on Brothie Ledge.

Inquiries Being Made Into the B. C. Pilotage System—Views of the Three Boards Asked.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

OTTAWA, Feb. 19.—Three writs were issued, to-day, for the elections in Monck and South Perth, March 10th; Montrose, March 11th.

The Imperial Board of Trade informed the Government that cattle ships may have cement floors, in place of wood.

Several rewards, for catch to foreign seamen, have been sent to Canadians, recently.

Pending the decision of Congress, relative to the Bland Free Coinage Bill, Senator John Sherman recommends that Canadians have as little to do with American silver as it is possible; in the event of the bill passing, the value of silver will depreciate.

Trudeau, a member of the House of Commons, contested by the defeated Conservative candidate.

The Maritime provinces cases were commenced in the Supreme Court to-day.

Members from the district, are commencing to arrive for the session.

Ontario capitalists have organized to-day to erect a new opera house here.

Leitzberg, a member of the House of Commons, contested by the defeated Conservative candidate.

The Government Infantry Corps will hereafter be designated by numbers instead of by letters.

Judge Ross in sentencing young Hubbell, the Ottawa Bank teller, to two years' imprisonment, for "embezzlement, said it was "Sucker's" operation of the bank, the ruin, and they were a ruin to the community.

Hon. Thomas McGreevy's resignation of the position of Quebec provincial agent was forwarded to the Conservative party. With Hearst as a straight nominee, the Conservatives with only McGreevy as the opponent of Laurier, were decidedly with the responsibility of supporting the latter. The chances are that McGreevy will use his influence against the Government candidate.

Hon. Mr. Costigan has gone to Quebec to help Mr. Hearst.

Major Colville, the Governor's military secretary, will resign his position in a month to return to regimental duty in England.

OTTAWA, Feb. 20.—As the outcome of the official enquiry into the wreck of the San Pedro, the Minister of Marine has authorized that a stone beacon be placed on Brothie Ledge, with an electric light on it.

The B. C. Board of Trade, in its communication to the Department, suggests that the pilotage districts of British Columbia be more closely connected. The Deputy Minister, in his report to Hon. Mr. Tupper, on the subject, says the former arrangement, whereby the pilots were managed from Victoria, gave great dissatisfaction. He suggests that the three pilotage authorities be placed under the supervision of the Department. The three pilotage boards are asked their views on the subject, when the Department proposes to do so.

East Hastings and South Ontario fell into line with a rush for the Government, to-day. Northrup, Conservative, by 412 majority, in East Hastings, and Smith, Liberal, by 300 majority, in South Ontario. This means the gain of four votes on a division. The Grits are not in it. It is said that, as the result of this reverse, the Liberals are expected to call an Ottawa, will set to work and revise their policy.

An influential deputation of Benchers of the Law of Ontario, headed by Hon. Mr. Edward Blake, interviewed Sir John Thompson, this afternoon, to urge a general increase of the salaries of the Superior Court Judges of Canada. The deputation pointed out the meagre salaries of the allowances compared with other countries, which caused a difficulty in inducing the best lawyers to accept judgeships. Sir John Thompson accepted judgeships. Sir John Thompson is expected to be promoted, and promised to lay the matter before his colleagues.

Dr. Spohn, Grit candidate for Simcoe, on Thursday at the nomination proceedings, charged the officers of the Marine Department with having levied commissions on parties furnishing supplies to the Government. To-day a commission would be issued to investigate the charge under oath.

General Herbert, has written the Colonel of the Grenadiers, Toronto