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### TO THE ELECTORS.

—OF—

#### Victoria City Electoral District.

Gentlemen:—The general election now being near at hand, and being a candidate for re-election, I wish to place my views on some of the questions commanding your attention, as well as to intimate the line of action which I shall take and the measures which I shall, if opportunity permits, support and maintain.

The party now in power have practically held office for over eleven years. Their policy has been an indefinite one on many of the questions requiring consideration. At the last general election the Opposition advocated reform in the land laws of the province, and have been able to make some important changes.

The privilege of allowing speculators and non-residents to take up large tracts of land has been taken away and the lands are now available for actual settlers.

By the efforts of the Opposition the assessment of the wild land has been much increased; the ad valorem principle of assessment according to the land value, is now the law.

There are two essential matters yet to be carried out in connection with encouraging of agricultural settlers. First, the surveying of available lands for such a purpose and giving the necessary information by the Lands and Works Department; second, the making of roads to such settlements, so that the farmer may be able to bring his produce to market—such a policy as this must be adopted in order to develop and encourage the farming industry of our province. By so doing we shall add much to our wealth and prosperity.

The railway policy of the Government has not been a business-like one. From the time of the grant given to the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway down to the Nakusp and Slocan deal, the interests of the province and the welfare of the people have not been well guarded. On the one hand a corporation receives a large subsidy and an immense tract of land, free from taxation forever; on the other, a private company is subsidized by guaranteeing the bonds to the full cost of the road as well as interest on the same for twenty-five years. One cannot but come to the conclusion that a Government policy of such a character is likely to bring the credit of the province into disrepute.

Monopolies of any kind are to be deplored, but monopolies backed by Government aid and support are often the most difficult to overcome. Government aid to such an extent as has been given in the instances referred to precludes other roads from being assisted or built. As an instance of this we recognize the difficulty of the British Pacific Railway will have in dealing with the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway and its existing rights. Thus by the action of the present Government in the past it looks as if the province were at the mercy of ringsters and monopolists who are despoiling the people of their heritage.

I am opposed to the executive using its power to make large appropriations of money by special warrant for roads, streets, bridges, and public works, without first submitting such to the Legislature. Such a course of action leads to favoritism and corruption and is not in accord with the principles of constitutional government.

I have advocated, and will continue to do so, the reduction of taxation on improvements and the abolition of taxes on mortgages. The latter impost presses doubly hard upon the borrower, and the repeal of this law would be in the interest and for the advancement of the province.

The practice followed on the eve of a general election of promising aid to public works and institutions by members of the executive should be condemned, as it is attempting to bribe the electors, with their own money. The independent electors should answer this by sending men to the Legislature who will do their utmost to remove such ministers from power.

During the past four years legislation has been brought about, chiefly by the Opposition, in reforming the School Law. The residents of the cities have now greater power over the management of their schools, and more is yet desired in this particular. I shall use my best endeavors to bring this about, so that our schools may be free of all political influences.

I have also advocated further restriction on Chinese immigration and the employment of Chinese by any company seeking charters or grants from the Legislature. I have advocated and still maintain that a clause should be inserted in all bills giving such privileges or aid to prevent the employment of this class of labor.

I also have advocated the necessity of employing residents of the province instead of non-residents or foreigners in the prosecution of all works or contracts let by the government.

It is impossible in an address of this kind to touch on all questions affecting the province. I hope, however, before long to have the opportunity of addressing the electors in public meeting, at which time I will refer to matters more extensively.

Hoping that my past record as a representative in the Local Legislature has been acceptable to you, I again seek your votes and support.

I remain, yours respectfully

G. L. MILNE

### OVER-POPULATION OF CITIES.

Many writers on economic subjects deplore the flocking of population to the cities and towns, and the consequent depopulation of country districts, says the California *Fruit Grower*. While there are unquestionably great evils resulting from the over-crowding of cities, not only in America but in most European countries also, it becomes a serious question what would become of the agricultural population if competition were made still more fierce by increasing very greatly the number of farm workers and producers. It is a very grave question, and cannot be settled merely by advising men to establish themselves upon farms. If we are already producing more than can be consumed, when only a part of our arable land is under good cultivation by less than one-half of the people, what could we expect with far more land under better cultivation by a great many more people? By greatly increasing the production, while at the same time decreasing the the consumption and the number of consumers who are not also producers of farm products, it does not readily appear wherein the producer would be greatly benefited. But our economic writers generally content themselves with deploring the tendency to urban life, and urge the unemployed and penniless of the cities to buy farms and go to producing something which is already in excess of demand at reasonable profit to the producer. The single-tax men affect to believe that a realization of their pet theory would bring about a satisfactory

solution of this question. Other political organizations, religious sects, temperance societies, etc., have each their own process for this and other evils that afflict mankind; but the main trouble with each and all is that they touch only one side of the question and perhaps not even that.

The abolition or mitigation of poverty is the greatest of all questions that confront mankind in these closing years of the 19th century of our Christian civilization.

The *Montreal Star* contains the following: "When the first despatches about the British Columbia floods were coming in, it was hoped by those having large interests in Pacific Coast enterprises that the reports would prove to be exaggerated. Unfortunately, British Columbia papers to hand, while showing a natural disposition to minimize the damage done, confirm the previous reports and show that the Province has experienced a serious disaster. It is an awful thing to have a river like the Fraser on the rampage. The British Columbians are plucky people, however, and know enough to get up when they are knocked down, and an action in which they will have the sympathy and support of their fellow Canadians. It will not be long until 'the great flood' will be as fully forgotten in British Columbia as 'the great fire' now in Chicago."

It may interest those who have taken an interest in Hon. Mr. Baker's labor bill to learn that a plan for referring labor-strike difference to a national board of arbitration has been formulated. Representative Kiefer, of Minnesota, a member of the Congressional labor committee. He will first present his measure to the committee before introducing it to the House. Mr. Kiefer's bill provides for the appointment by the President of three commissioners of arbitration. The commissioner of labor is made ex-officio member of the arbitration board. The Governor of a state in which a labor controversy occurs is also a member. The appeal for arbitration to the board can be made to the Governor by employers or employees. In the latter case the application must be in behalf of at least fifty employees of an organization having 1,000 members throughout the country. If the Governor is satisfied that a conflict exists which cannot be amicably settled he applies to the national board of arbitration to take charge of the question.