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VICTORIA, TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 1894.

U. S. CONSULATE.

Although it was recognized that U. S. Consul Myers had done the State some special service in connection with sealing matters, the bringing to light of opium frauds and the seizures of quantities of the contraband, the carrying out of the Jacksonian principle of "to the victors belong the spoils" was inevitable in his case. In consequence, doubtless of the pressure brought to bear upon him by the office seekers, President Cleveland, as already announced, has appointed William P. Roberts to the consulate here, which he is expected to assume on July 1. It is probable that after visiting his old home in Ohio Mr. Myers will settle down in Seattle, his predilections being in favor of the Pacific coast.

THE BLACK DEATH.

The presence in Hong Kong and other Oriental cities of the Black Death, an epidemic similar to the great plague of London, has, not unnaturally, caused considerable alarm, and at the solicitation of Mayor Teague, through Mr. Earle, M. P., the Dominion authorities have issued instructions to Dr. Macnaughton Jones not only to inspect but to thoroughly disinfect and fumigate all steamer passengers and baggage arriving from China and Japan, before allowing inbound ships to pass William's Head. Premier Davie energetically backed up the Mayor's representations, and it is to be hoped that the malady which has been fearfully fatal wherever it has been will be prevented from getting a hold here. Filth is said to be the prime cause of the disease, and a large number of people have already succumbed to it in Hong Kong and Canton.

PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS.

In the majority of the constituencies in the Province, the nomination of candidates for election to the Provincial Legislature took place on Saturday. The news as to the results, owing to the magnificent distances to be traversed, is very meagre,

so far. The contests, the indications are, will be very numerous, more so probably than on any previous occasion, and few is likely to be the number of elections by acclamation. The government has, however, taken first blood. Premier Davie, President of the Council Pooley, Speaker Higgins and Major Mutter have been returned by acclamation, which gives the present administration a start of four. We regret to have to notice a serious interference with freedom of speech at a recent meeting at Vancouver, a circumstance in itself almost sufficient to answer the complaint of Rev. Mr. Maxwell that the cabinet Ministers were not often heard at the Terminal City. We do not, we must say, like to see ministers of the gospel interfere in politics. When they do so, they diminish their influence as clergymen, and, as partisans, lay themselves open to the application to their case of the divine maxim "No man can serve two masters."

MISCHIEVOUS CREDIT SYSTEM.

Under the heading of "What is the Matter with Hannah?" the *Winnipeg Commercial* has been discussing the present stringent and otherwise unsatisfactory state of trade among country merchants and is satisfied that in the field of freight rates no direct cause can be found. In its last issue it declares that the main cause of all the trouble is the reckless system of credit which has been the custom throughout the country. It goes on to say that the offers made by Manitoba merchants of ten per cent discount for cash and in not a few instances as much as fifteen per cent., is a loud protest against credit as at present given, for no mercantile profits at present will stand a shave of fifteen per cent for cash. Moreover, recent legislation has placed the farmers even further beyond the reach of the retailers' collectors and, says our contemporary, there never was more need for a convention of retail merchants to discuss the situation than there is now.

It is added that in almost every case of insolvency reported the great shrinkage is in the book debts, which have been found in many cases to be valueless. Indeed, inquiry has shown that while insolvent's assets on their shelves have been found to be worth on the average 60 cents on the dollar, those in the books do not average 15 cents. It is said that "the country merchant has all along been the unsecured creditor of the farmer, and it is hard to see how he can devise a system which will secure him. While he has been giving credit without security, the mortgage company, the farm machinery agent, and the local money lender, as well as other shrewd operators, have been se-

curing liens and mortgages on all the farmer possesses."

In this Province most of our merchants have not been placed under the same conditions as their brethren of Manitoba, where the dependence has practically been on the one crop, still they have got mad on the subject of credit and both in town and country credit has been given to a degree which an inquiry into the individual cases would by no means warrant. Frequently entreaties to pay have been of no avail, while threats of legal action have been no better, and at the present time we learn that the merchants' books are full of good, bad and indifferent accounts, upon which in the meantime it is hard to realize anything.

Merchants will do well to turn over a new leaf in this particular by materially restricting, if not doing away with, existing lines of credit, making their debtors do something in the way of paying instalments on old accounts and paying as they go for the future. This would be found more satisfactory for all parties. It might at first be somewhat difficult to carry out this idea, but once inaugurated it could not fail to be for the better. Doubtless some people, during the present stringency, would require to be temporarily carried over; but, a very early period—say, for instance, the turn of the month—might reasonably be expected to come under the new order of things.

ERASTUS WIMAN.

Five and a half years in Sing Sing penitentiary is what Erastus Wiman has now to look forward to. He has already gone to take his place among the convicts and to be known by his number. It is much to be regretted that a man of his ability and energy should have come to such a fate, the more so, as the indications are that there was more in the prosecution than the desire to bring a malefactor to justice. In fact it was said that when he left the concern Mr. Wiman contemplated the establishment of another mercantile agency. This, however, he promptly denied. Whatever the intention may have been, however, Mr. Wiman, in the penitentiary, has more sympathizers than he had before he went there. It is noticeable, too, that the almost universal feeling in Canada is that he has been hardly dealt with and those who most opposed his projects for trade relations between the United States and the Dominion have now much to say in his favor. From among some of the Canadian editorial deliverances we take the following: "If his offence were a case of ordinary forgery nothing could be said against the sentence, but there appears to be a set of peculiar circumstances connected with it that might, perhaps, have warranted its being removed from that category."