

A very fair amount of work was done during the session of the Legislative Assembly which ended yesterday. There are sixty-two Acts on the list, some of which required long and careful consideration. Although there were no very brilliant or striking measures before the Assembly during the session its legislation will, we believe, prove to be most useful—will tend to promote the welfare of the province. Measures about which little is said or written are often more beneficial in their operation and produce more lasting results than many of those whose passage is preceded and attended by violent agitation. The amendments to the mining acts, which make claim-jumping an impossibility or next to an impossibility, are legislation of this kind. So is the act for the encouragement of dairying. We believe that the change that has been made in the land laws will be followed by good effects. The act to preserve the forests from destruction by fire will, if well carried out, do much to preserve to the Province one of its richest resources. It seems to us that people generally do not place a high enough value on the forests of the country. Lumber has been for some time a drug in the markets of the world, but it will not long remain so. Forests on this continent and almost everywhere else are disappearing at so rapid a rate that the day cannot be far distant when it will be very hard indeed to procure good timber. Twenty or thirty years appears to be a long time for an individual to wait for adequate returns from his property; but twenty or thirty years is a very small part of the life of a country. At the end of that period the forests that remain in British Columbia will, we are satisfied, be worth many times more than equal areas of timber lands to-day. Consequently, any law that has the effect of preserving its forests and preventing the waste of growing timber must be most advantageous to its inhabitants.

A great deal of the work done during the session is not seen and, we fear, not fully appreciated by the people. The representatives of the people have aided the Government in making provision for the different services which go a very long way towards making the Province a pleasant place to live in and towards helping its inhabitants to make its resources available. They have had to provide for the maintenance of the roads and bridges of the Province, and to see that no part of it suffers for want of more and better road accommodation. They have to take measures to keep the excellent school system of the Province in a state of efficiency, and to have new school districts marked out and new school houses built where they are wanted. The representatives of the people, too, keep the Government informed as to the way in which justice is administered in the different districts, and suggest improvements where they are needed. Very little, indeed, is said about this part of the work of the members of the Legislative Assembly, but it is as necessary as the enactment of new laws, and it is sometimes very difficult of performance. It is often said that the members have very little to do while they are in Victoria, but this is quite a mistake. They have much to do and it is very creditable to them that they do it so well.

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER.

It is to be hoped that the Liberal Conservatives of Vancouver will soon come to the conclusion that there is nothing to be gained but a great deal to be lost by disagreement and dissension. They can, if they are cordially united, carry the district easily, but if they continue divided they will be pretty sure to be defeated, and defeat under such circumstances will be peculiarly ignominious. Let the discreet men among them set to work earnestly to heal the breach that may have been made, and let the members of the party unite upon a candidate with the determination to have him returned. It will be impossible to get a candidate that will please everyone. Some will, in any case, have to give way to others to ensure success, and this consideration should prevent any one being too tenacious of his own opinion or too determined to have the candidate of his choice selected by the party. There is no time to lose in mere disputing. The time has come to work and to work with a will. We trust that the next news we hear from Vancouver will be that the party has chosen its candidate by a unanimous vote and that it is in good shape to go on with the canvass.

AN ARTFUL DODGER.

Mr. Joseph Martin has been acting the busybody as far as British Columbia matters are concerned. He has only to say a word or two on a British Columbia subject and his fellow Grits in Victoria are ready to cry out, "See what Martin has done!" The trick is not an ingenious one, and we are very greatly mistaken if it deceives anybody. No one in Victoria is really such a fool as to believe that Martin can get an advantage for this province which has been refused to its representatives, or that he is more earnest or more effective in pushing its claims than they are. The dodge

is to puff Martin at the expense of Messrs. Prior and Earle particularly. We do not think that Martin will be greatly elevated by their puffing, or that Messrs. Prior and Earle will be in the least discredited. British Columbia would have got as much as it has obtained this session if Martin had been among the bandits of Nicaragua this session instead of filibustering in Ottawa.

EVASION, A FINE ART.

Everyone remembers that Mr. Laurier was reported by a French Liberal paper to have, in a speech which he made in Chicoutimi, thanked Heaven that there were no Orangemen in the Liberal party. The matter came up in the House of Commons on the 10th. Mr. McGilivray read from Le Progrès de Saguenay an article containing the statement attributed to Mr. Laurier. There was quite a dispute about the matter, some honorable gentlemen, among whom was the member from Chicoutimi, declaring that Mr. Laurier did use the words attributed to him, and others maintaining that he did not—that the whole story was a "lie." Mr. Laurier himself was evasive. He did not say distinctly that he did not utter the words, neither did he admit in definite terms that he did. It will be seen below how the discussion, if it can be properly called a discussion, ended. The intelligent reader will be able from the remarks of Mr. Foster and Mr. Laurier to form his own conclusions in the matter—whether the Liberal French-Canadian reporter put words into Mr. Laurier's mouth that he never uttered, or whether Mr. Laurier, considering he was safe in Chicoutimi to say what would be most pleasing to his hearers respecting the Orangemen, used expressions which did not sound well in Ontario, and which it is his interest now to repudiate as far as he dares. Here are Mr. Foster's remarks:

Mr. Foster—It would be far more satisfactory if we had a direct statement from the leader of the Opposition himself. If he did make such a speech at Chicoutimi, he could not have made such a statement without it being pretty firmly imprinted on his memory. It would be far more satisfactory if he could say himself whether he really did make such a statement or not. The hon. leader of the Opposition, who is the principal in the matter, surely knows exactly what he did say. He has never denied it as far as I have heard, since that statement.

Mr. Foster then read from La Patrie what purported to be a revised and corrected report of the hon. gentleman's speech, in which occurred the sentence, "Thank God there are no Orangemen among us, the Liberals." Mr. Foster continued: Now, that is the statement made officially by a very respectable Liberal paper, La Patrie, which is looked upon as one of the first French papers in the Province of Quebec. The statement has done service all through the province. I have never seen a French paper, an explicit denial by the hon. member of the statement. It is a most important statement for any man to make. I hope the hon. member has not made it, and if he denies it will willingly suppose that he has not made it. He has never denied it in the Province of Quebec; will he deny it now?

Mr. Laurier—If the honorable gentleman thinks that his cleverness will draw me from the position which I have taken he is very much mistaken (cries of oh, oh, oh, and laughter from the Conservative benches), and so are the man who sit behind him. I have been in the habit of speaking for a great many years in this house and out of it. I think I have been in the habit of governing my tongue, and I think I have been given credit for possessing some common sense. I am responsible, I repeat again, for every speech which was delivered by me, but I demand that the report should be a verbatim report. The honorable gentleman calls this an official statement.

Mr. Foster—It says that it gives the exact words.

Mr. Laurier replied that it was a mere reproduction from the report of the Elector of the day before. The Elector received the report from Chicoutimi, and it only consisted of ten or twelve lines. He declined to be held responsible for such a report as that, and he appealed to the sense of fairness of the members of the House. He was travelling at the time, and his attention was called to the matter by Mr. Smith, the Liberal organizer for the province of Ontario. He wrote Mr. Smith a letter, which was published in the Globe, which contained all the denial he had to give, and all he intended to give.

We give the report as it is published in the Montreal Gazette. Mr. Foster's plain and pertinent remarks are suppressed by the Toronto Globe. This is very significant. From the very evasive nature of Mr. Laurier's replies, those who conclude that Mr. Laurier did say the words attributed to him cannot, with justice, be said to be uncharitable.

Mr. Laurier's statement that he cannot be made responsible for words he is said to have uttered unless they formed part of a speech reported verbatim is much more ingenious than honest. Nothing is more common than for a hearer to take down verbatim an striking expression that a speaker may use, and the expression so taken is much more likely to be exactly the words uttered than a sentence taken from what purports to be a verbatim report. We never heard that Mr. Vanderbilt repudiated the very striking expression which he used with regard to the public because the report of the conversation in which it occurred was not taken verbatim by a skilled shorthand reporter. We do not believe that there is a reporter in the Province of Quebec, French Canadian or English, who would dream of attributing the devout expression of thanks to Mr. Laurier if he had not used it. Mr. Laurier should, in

his denials and evasions, have some regard for what the men of his own race designate "vraieblance."

AN EXPERIENCED MANITOBIAN.

Mr. James Fisher, M.P.P. for Russell, Manitoba, is a Liberal and a Presbyterian. He therefore is not open to the imputation of being favorable to separate schools or being unduly partial to Roman Catholics. His remarks to an interviewer on the alternative proposal made by the Manitoba Government show that he is well acquainted with the working of common schools in the rural districts of the Dominion. Here is a passage from the interview:

"As to the counter proposal of the local Government, its acceptance could never have been looked for. Mr. Greenway and Mr. Sitton have repeatedly declared themselves opposed to purely secular schools. The alternative proposal to close the regular school exercises at half past three and allow clergymen of all the denominations to teach religion for the other half hour would never work in practice. In the first place it is no part of a clergyman's duty to take the class of work; they have all the work on their hands now that they can attend to. Then in the rural districts it would be utterly impossible for clergymen to attend the schools. In the next place it would be a practical secularization of the schools, because it would mean non-recognition of religion in any form during the regular school hours. It would be driving the Bible out of the schools almost as effectively as if they were made wholly secular. What is wanted by Anglicans and Presbyterians, as well as by Catholics, is that in the school itself as conducted by the teacher, there should be a recognition of religion and Christianity. And when these are driven out of the regular school, the mere opening of the school buildings for voluntary exercises by clergymen who have the time to conduct them, and on whom no duty is cast in the matter, the state practically secularizes the school."

"I think," continued Mr. Fisher, "that the local authorities have assumed a grave responsibility in failing to take the proposition of the Dominion commissioners as a basis of settlement. In detail several modifications might probably have been made. If parliament shall proceed now to pass the remedial bill into law, on the local government must rest the responsibility for the province losing control over its educational law."

AN INTERESTING ADDRESS.

Mr. Templeman and Dr. Milne have taken time by the forelock. Their joint address "To the Electors of the Electoral District of Victoria" appeared on the editorial page of Friday evening's Times. It reads very much like an extract from a Grit stump speech or a passage clipped from an ultra-Grit editorial. The story it tells is very old, and the gentlemen will, we think, find when they have time to examine them that some of their statements are not exactly accurate.

protection or they would not defend it against any competition, no matter how powerful it might be or how certain it would be to crush any infant industry that tried to contend against it. They would allow the farmers and stockraisers of the Province to be swamped by the importation duty free of the cheap farm products, cattle, sheep and hogs of Washington, Oregon and California. They would have our farmers and ranchers fight against this competition without a shred of protection or leave the country. And they would have young manufacturing industries struggle on as best they might under a revenue tariff or dwindle and die. This is how, according to their own address, Mr. Templeman and Dr. Milne would treat the farmers, the stockraisers and the manufacturers of the Victoria district and the rest of the province, for do they not say that they fully endorse the opposition platform adopted at the Ottawa convention in 1893, which platform denounces "the principle of protection as radically unsound." What stonger language could they use in condemnation of protection than this?

We are glad, however, to see the candidates come out squarely on this trade issue and we trust that they will not for their own credit sake try to shuffle out of the position which they have now so openly and so boldly taken.

The statement which we wish to notice is not a matter of party politics at all. In fact its subject matter is a grievance of which, if we remember rightly, we were the first to complain. Messrs. Templeman and Milne say:

"We are opposed to the bleeding process the province of British Columbia has been forced for years to contribute to the Dominion Treasury in customs, excise, fishery and other duties and to Eastern monopolists over two millions a year in excess of the sum returned to us for all purposes."

We should like to see how the candidates figure out these two millions. We believe if they went over the blue books fairly and carefully they would find an excess, as they put it, considerably over two million. However, they have staked their credit for truthfulness and accuracy on the two millions, and they must show the electors of the district that they have not been either careless, ignorant or dishonest in making this representation.

As we have said before, this is not a party matter. The Federal Government takes from the province no more than that to which it is entitled by the terms of Confederation, and we have not heard that Mr. Laurier or the Liberal Convention has become bound to refund to any province any part of the receipts from that province over and above what is expended in it out of the Federal Treasury. We know very well that the Grits did not act upon this principle when they were in power. They then took from the provinces every dollar that the Dominion was entitled to, and gave back as little as they possibly could. The old-timers in this province have a very distinct recollection of how close-fisted the Grits were when they were entrusted with the keys of the Treasury. They, in fact, tried very hard indeed to wriggle out of expending on British Columbia's behalf what they were bound to do by the terms of Confederation. So acute did the dispute between the Grit Government and the Province of British Columbia become that an Imperial Minister of the Crown was called in to arbitrate between them.

Until Messrs. Templeman and Milne get the Liberal leader and his party fully to endorse the paragraph of their address that we have quoted above it must be taken by the intelligent electors of Victoria as so much buncombe.

PHYSICIANS' SECRETS.

When is a physician justified in revealing secrets imparted to him in confidence by patients or that he discovers for himself in the course of his practice, is a question which an English jury was called upon the other day practically to decide. Dr. Playfair was called in to attend Mrs. Arthur Kitson, who had not lived with her husband since 1892. The Doctor, in the course of his attendance on the lady, believed that he had found out something which, if it were generally known, would be ruinous to her reputation. Dr. Playfair believed it to be his duty to mention the fact to his wife, who was intimate with Mrs. Kitson, and Mrs. Playfair thought it incumbent on her to mention the discovery which her husband thought he had made to Sir James Kitson, Mrs. Kitson's brother-in-law, who thereupon withdrew from the lady the allowance of £400 a year which he had been paying to her for some time, and which had been her only means of support.

Mrs. Kitson then prosecuted Dr. Playfair for slander. The case was tried by Mr. Justice Hawkins, and the trial lasted seven days. Dr. Playfair pleaded that he had only done his duty in mentioning the matter to his wife to prevent her continuing to associate with Mrs. Kitson. Evidence was given by medical men as to when a physician is justified in revealing professional secrets. Judge Hawkins in his address to the jury said that "The medical men called said that there were two exceptions to the rule imposing on them secrecy as to confidences gained during professional attendance. The first was as to giving evidence in a court of law. His Lordship did not altogether agree with what

they said as to that. It all depended upon the judge. The judge might in some cases refuse to commit a medical man for contempt in refusing to reveal confidences. Each case would be governed by the particular circumstances, and the ruling of the judges deciding no doubt according to law, would be the test. Secondly, they said if there were circumstances from which they supposed a crime was intended to be committed, they would have to inform the Public Prosecutor."

The jury found that Dr. Playfair was in the wrong, and they assessed the damages at £12,000 (\$60,000). The verdict was certainly a pretty stiff one, but the judge evidently approved of it and it was received with loud applause in court.

The Times concludes quite a long article on the case as follows:

"We need not assume that in his (Dr. Playfair's) after conduct he was actuated by malice in the common sense of the word. But we cannot but consider that he made a grave mistake of judgment. He has been severely punished for it, both by the findings of the jury and the damages he will have to pay. Our only satisfaction in the case is that it teaches a lesson not, we feel sure, greatly needed by the medical profession, that if a medical man reveals a professionally gained secret he does so at his peril. An exceptional confidence is reposed in him. His consulting room is in the nature of a confessional, and the disclosures made in it are hardly less sacred than those made to the confessor priest. Occasionally in the interests of justice he may feel bound to break silence and to answer questions put to him in a court of law, but he must himself choose rather to offend by silence than to expose himself to the shadow of a charge of indiscretion and unbecoming babbling. On no other terms can he claim the full confidence which he now constantly enjoys."

THE NEWS FROM AFRICA.

Matters appear to be in a critical condition in South Africa. The Boers are assuming a threatening attitude and the Matabele are in open revolt. In times like these one feels almost sorry that the telegraph news-service is not under a rigid censorship. Newspaper correspondents are in these days so fond of sensationalism, they are so prone to exaggerate and to make the worst of things, that readers are altogether at a loss to know how much of the telegraphic news they read to accept as true and how much to reject as false. There again there are newsmongers, when the news is not sensational enough or spicy enough to please them, who do not hesitate to invent rumors and to give accounts of incidents that never took place. As to their surmises and predictions it is not safe to place the slightest reliance upon them. It is possible for them to know what has taken place and many telegraphic correspondents give fair and truthful accounts of what has been openly said and done. But when they come to deal with what has taken place in secret and to speculate as to what is going to take place it is not safe to place the slightest reliance upon their announcements and predictions. The situation in Matabele and the Transvaal may be as serious as the telegrams describe it to be but we think it will be prudent to discount the news they contain liberally for it is quite likely the reader may find by and by to his disgust that he has been grossly imposed upon and that matters were not half so bad as the telegrams described them to be.

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