The Colonist.

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THE PERSONAL EQUATION OF SUFFERING.

The extent to which Mr. Chamberlain is going straight to the heart of the British workingman is giving serious alarm to the school of doctrinaire politicians which is opposing him. We confess to having been very much impressed by his use of the phrase which is the title of this article. We were the more impressed because his point of view was a purely British point of view, and one that is not, and could not be, a Canadian point of view for many long years to come. We are accustomed to advocate protection as a means of establishing and promoting new industries for the supply of the Canadian market. The displacement of industry is a problem which hardly affects us; and it certainly does not affect us in the same way as it affects the skilled British mechanic. If an industry is killed in Canada, it is merely transferred to the United States, and our skilled workers in it, go with it across the border. This is a grievous national loss, but it involves no "personal equation of suffering" such as accompanies a similar phenomenon in Great Britain. In Great Britain there are twelve millions of people dwelling wolfishly on the confines of starvation. Every skilled industry, killed by foreign competition reduces the mechanics of that industry to the ranks of those twelve millions of casual workers. They cannot get away. It is that which makes the problem so sinister, so gloomy, and so tragic in Great Britain. The free traders reck nothing of all this. They say with calm assurance, that if foreigners learn and protect a trade, it is for the benefit of Great Britain that the skilled mechanics of that trade, should be forced into trades in which they have no skill. Here are some words of Mr. Chamberlain which are at once masterly and eloquent, and to us not less touching because they portray conditions to which we are not subject, to which only those who are our blood and kin are subject: "But here is a curious contrast, a most impressive contrast. Twenty-five years ago Warrington alone, one single town alone, exported more wire than the whole make of wire in Germany; and now Germany exports more wire than the whole make of England. (Shame.) All right but why 'shame'? (Laughter and cheers.) If there are any foreign members of the Cobden Club here laughter), you will shock them very much indeed. They say, 'What do you complain of? You have cheap food. What do you complain of? They say, 'You have these things, this wire, this glass, these watches; you have them very cheap.' You say, 'But we have no money to buy them with.' (Cheers and laughter.) Ah, I do not know what they would say to that. They ought to say that is the great glory of the doctrine which you support. Now, another answer which is made is, 'What does it matter? You have lost all those trades, truly. You are losing others, but there is something that remains. The men who made watches are doing something else.' Yes, and what do they do? Here is a man who makes a watch. For that he requires a fineness of touch that often is hereditary, which can only be obtained after years of work, obtained only in youth and never obtained in after life; and the moment the watch trade ceases, or does not continue to employ the same number of workpeople, this man, who has acquired the special gift that is worth much to himself and his family, has to throw it away, to destroy it. He has to go and act as a porter or a dock laborer, or to sweep the streets, and if afterwards we restore to him his trade he would be no longer able to take advantage of it. He is dropped into the ranks of the casual employee, dropped down into the thirteen millions, be they more or be they less, who are always on the verge of hunger. I say that the personal equation of suffering which all this transference of trade involves is the sort of thing which political economists never think of at all (hear, hear), and the Cobden Club treats it as if it were of no consequence. It is, I say, of the utmost consequence. Even if it could be proved in the long run that the country did not suffer in wealth that had been transferred from one country to another, still I should say, when you count up the families that have been reduced to mistery, all the heart-burning, all the suffering that has been caused by these changes to the individual, when you think of the honest men who have gone to the workhouse and can never be brought back again to the ranks of continuous labor—when you think of all these things, then I say even if the country were enriched, it would have been dearly purchased. (Hear, hear.)" That may not be eloquence according to Demosthenes, or Cicero, or Gladstone, or even our dear dilettante, the Earl of Rosebery, but if it causes a thrill in our hearts who are not affected, how is it likely to touch those to whom its tragic import is near at hand. What does touch us, however, is that the free traders, who view with complacency the "equation of personal suffering" when the transference of industry involves, accuse us of being eager, for a greater margin of profit upon our wheat, to make the conditions of life still harder for these poor folk. While in reality we wish, through their incorporation in a noble and self-supporting Empire, to bring to their tragical existences something of the hope and buoyancy, something of the opportunies that inspire our own.

THE WEATHER.

There are some who think it is a sort of tempting providence to say anything about the weather. There are others who maintain that it is a patriotic duty never to publish anything injurious about Victoria weather. The one attitude is superstition, the other is idiotic. We are neither superstitious nor idiotic and we simply voice the unanimous sentiment in saying that the weather under which we are suffering in this city at present is as abominable as it is unusual. As a grain of comfort, however, we can assure our readers that ours is not by any means a unique experience. This fall has proved itself in many ways, and in all places in the northern hemisphere at least, an untoward season. We learn that in London, which, in this case may be considered typical of the whole of England, that no such rainfall as has occurred this year has been previously known to history. A continuous record has been kept since 1858. During the forty-six years, only in six years has a record of thirty inches of rain been exceeded, and of these the wettest was 1878, in which 34.08 inches of rain fell. Up to October 27th the rainfall for 1903 has amounted to 34.61 inches, so the record has already been broken. It is not known how much rain may fall between the 27th of October and the end of the year, but it is almost certain that London, for the first time in history, will have been subjected to a yard of rain in a single year. Of course the prize idiot has appeared in the London press finding a cause to account for the unwonted humidity. Of all things in the world it is ascribed to Signor Marconi's experiments. A correspondent of the London Chronicle gravely writes, and the London Chronicle as gravely publishes that, "we know, indeed very little about the nature and correlation of the ether or of electricity. But we know that thunderstorms—disturbances of the electrical conditions of the atmosphere—are usually accompanied and followed by torrential downpours, and often by a more or less prolonged "break-up of the fine weather," as is the saying. We know, also, that lightning rods are used with much effect in France for warding off hailstorms, which they do, apparently, by reducing the local tension of the atmospheric electricity. From these facts it appears not impossible that the chronic thunderstorms—even if not quite on the scale of nature—which are more or less constantly raging at Poldhu, Cape Breton, and other points on the Atlantic, may produce a notable effect on the moisture of the atmosphere in those regious. And, as the prevalent winds of these latitudes are westerly, we are the ones to suffer by such disturbances. It would be satisfactory if some of our eminent electricians or meteorologists could give us an assurance that such an effect could not be produced. Otherwise, it might be necessary, in the interests of the community, to request Signor Marconi to desist from his experiments, or at least to remove to some place where deluges would be more welcome—Emperor Lebaudy's realm of Sahara, for instance. Even such a boon as wireless telegraphy may be bought too dear, if it means a continuance of weather such as has prevailed for many months—ever since, in fact, the Poldhu experiments commenced." The only adequate comment upon such an exhibition of childishness is "Jupiter pluvius!" In what way has the human race advanced from the Dark Ages in which men found the explanation of remarkable occurrences in the activity of necromancers? The attitude of mind of this correspondent of the Chronicle is not remote from that which committed witches and sorcerers to the stake. The witch burners believed, and this correspondent believes in sorcery. The former expressed their belief in action. The latter is content to write to the newspapers, a modern equivalent for determinate action.

THE ADVERSITY CRY.

The opponents of the government are already beginning to raise the adversity cry. This is an old story. There is no doubt at all but that British Columbia has been injuriously affected in credit and reputation by the persistency with which this cry has been raised during the last few years. We venture to say that more than half the injury has resulted not from the politics of British Columbia, but in the politics of British Columbia; not from bad government, but from the opposition of factions and classes ever ready to defile their own nest if they could not get their own way. Everyone almost in the country, who was out of power, or whose friends were out of power, has immediately raised the cry that the country was going to the dogs. Can anybody be surprised that an echo of this cry has come back from abroad, which has injuriously affected the country? In the eyes of some, gold is not yellow in British Columbia, copper is not red, and silver is not white, and coal is not black. Everything is green, colored from the spectacles of political jealousy and disappointed faction. It is said that under some circumstances of chagrin and disappointment a rattlesnake will fix its fangs in its own body and sting itself to death. The journalistic and factional rattlesnakes to whom we are referring, fix their fangs in the country, and abuse and vilify it because their own designs to profit at its expense have been thwarted. We are not referring to the Liberal party, but to class and factional interests which would soon be at war with the Liberal party if it were in power, who would squeeze British Columbia like a sponge for their own advantage, and thwarted in doing so, are ready to declare that the sponge is dry. The kind of language in which these interests indulge is well illustrated by this sentence quoted from the Rossland Miner: "Since the election of McBride's crowd to the control of provincial affairs by a bare majority of one, the general business condition of British Columbia has gone from bad to worse." This is a ridiculously untrue statement of fact. Bradstreets says of British Columbia: "At Victoria, Vancouver and other Pacific Coast distributing points business is reported as good for this season. Payments are generally more satisfactory than in previous years at this time. The fact that the receipts of city taxes in Vancouver were largely ahead of any other years as recently reported, and bank clearings in the two cities are showing substantial increase are proof of the more prosperous conditions of business." During the last week the bank clearings for the Mainland of British Columbia increased 29.5 per cent and those of Vancouver island 35.5 per cent. Productive activity in British Columbia was never so great as it is just now; and not only does industrial peace reign, but it gives every indication of continuing without serious interruption for a long time to come. Driven from the consideration of actual achievement in the province, these detractors of our good name fall back on the general accusation that capital is not coming into the country. It is perhaps true that capital has not been coming into the province "on spec" to the same extent during the the last few years as during a previous period. But the cause of that has had nothing to do with the laws or politics of the country. We have never seen the time in the province, when a mine from which metal could be produced at a profit, or a timber limit from which logs could be produced at a profit, or any other profitable undertaking would not fetch its full value. Yet, if the laws and politics of the country were hopelessly rotten, not speculative undertakings would suffer, but actually productive undertakings would suffer as well. Even if we regard speculative capital, we do not know that the new gold camps of Camborne and Poplar Creek have been discriminated against by speculative capital to any large extent, because they happened to be within the confines of British Columbia. There has not been any greater lack of energy to explore them, or money to develop them, because they happened to be in British Columbia, than there would have been had they happened to be somewhere else. It is true that speculative capital has been restricted in its now westwards by the enormous inducements offered to speculators by the industrial boom in the East. British Columbia has, in common with other places, been affected by that restriction, but not to any greater extent on account of local political conditions, except indeed where the cry of "stinking fish" raised by disappointed political agitators has antagonized outside sentiment. Our opinion is that the diminution of industrial opportunities and profits in the East, will again drive capital West, and that British Columbia, as a country affording the greatest and most varied opportunities, will receive a great deal of attention. The industrial and economic position of British Columbia is perfectly sound. The political condition of British Columbia has very little to do with the movements of capital or with industry, except in one contingency, a contingency threatened by the opposition to Mr. Wilson in Vancouver, that namely, of neither party being able to give the country a permanent and stable government. We are not sufficiently idiotic to maintain that growth of industry and an influx of capital are entirely dependent upon a Conservative administration, any more than they are entirely dependent on a Liberal administration. The one hostile political circumstance we can see to the splendid outlook before British Columbia at the present time, is that neither party should be able to administer the affairs of the province. This is a condition of affairs which the defeat of Mr. Wilson would assist in bringing about, and therefore it is a duty which transcends the limitations of partizanship. and to which we imagine the electors of Vancouver will not be blind, to see that he is triumphantly returned.

INDEPENDENCE.

Harper's Weekly is an American publication which discusses a wide range of topics in such a way as to provide food for thought to anyone capable of thinking. The interpretation placed by it upon Sir Wilfrid Laurier's attitude to the British Empire, if not correct, is at least suggestive: "Sir Wilfrid Laurier," it says, "has for the third time made clear in what light he views the imperial connection. He has already declared that Canada would assert her independence rather than give up a single iota of her right to arrange all fiscal and financial matters wholly in her own interests. He has firmly refused to let Canada be drawn into the maelstrom of militarism; that is, pay a reasonable contribution towards the total war bills of the Empire. He tells us now, in connection with the Alaskan award, that Canada should herself have the treaty-making power, and that her interests are constantly sacrificed, because she must present her demands to Washington through the British ambassador, who is far more preoccupied with establishing good relations between England and the United States than with serving the interests of the Dominion. Should he carry his point, and actually obtain the treaty-making power for Canada, it is difficult to see in what way Canada would differ from an independent sovereign state, except in the pageantry and form of receiving an English Governor-General, who exercises some of the functions of royalty, and in the perpetuation of titles such as that of Sir Wilfrid himself, as would hardly be done were Canada a republic. One cannot fail to be struck by the fact that in this growing desire for one after another of the functions of independent sovereignty we have a force making for separation, much stronger and deeper than the forces of union foreshadowed by Mr. Chamberlain, supposing what is by no means certain, that the ex-colonial secretary ever lives to see his schemes carried into effect." The conclusion of the article is very interesting. Let us admit that the force it alludes to is in existence, whether the manifestations it mentions are inspired by it, or whether Sir Wilfrid Laurier is an exponent of it or not. Certainly the gentlemen of the Canadian Club in Toronto, who cheered to the echo the statement that many of them would see the great step taken which would lead to separation and independence, are exponents of such a force. We may also admit that most individuals are more or less the sport of external forces both in their opinions and actions. There are men whose individuality acts powerfully upon the mass, but in most, the opinions and tendencies of the mass completely outweigh their independent volition. It is a good thing that it is so. If it were not so, there would be no cohesion possible in human society. If we admit so much, however, we need not go further and admit the relative strength of the two forces alluded to, as asserted by Harper's Weekly. The following paraphrase of its remarks could have been said, and was said, over and over again in different circumstances: "One cannot fail to be struck by the fact that in this passionate attachment of the several states to the functions of independent sovereignty, we have a force making for separation, much stronger and deeper than the forces of union foreshadowed by Mr. Abraham Lincoln, supposing what is by no means certain, that the present candidate for the presidency ever lives to see the final struggles of his policy." Or again a wider paraphrase might have been made, and we have no doubt was made in yet different circumstances: "One cannot fail to be struck by the fact that in this passionate attachment to the functions of independent sovereignty, and absorption in local affairs, in the various German kingdoms and principalities, we have a force making for separation much stronger and deeper than the vague sentiment of attachment to the Fatherland, now being exploited by the military power of Prussia in the hope of founding an Empire, coupled though it be with the mercenary attraction of a wholly impracticable Zollverein." That is, we take it exactly similar languages applied to circumstances not widely different. Yet we know that the union force, both in the United States and in Germany, proved an immensely stronger force than the separation force, although both countries have grown so great in manifest consonance with destiny, that we are apt to forget the crisis of their birth. We know further that it was a force exerted along lines exactly parallel to those along which Mr. Chamberlain is striving to direct the energies of the British people. Why then, need we accept the pessimism of Harper's Weekly? Are we to fail where the United States and the German Empire succeeded? Never, unless the spirit of the race is dead. Is there not every ground for supposing that a force which, in so short a time, has made such mighty world powers out of Germany and the United States would, applied to the scattered elements of the British Empire, triumph over the forces of disintegration, increase the lustre of the Empire, and guarantee its permanence for centuries.

A FAIR PROPOSAL.

If we were to take up the line of permitting the Times to say exactly what it pleased on the political situation before the Vancouver election, without comment or contradiction on the understanding that it was to keep strict silence afterwards, would not that be a fair proposal? What we mean is this: It argues now that events have happened since the general election which would justify the electors in reversing the verdict they then gave. We differ as to the significance of these events it is true. But that is not the point. The Times asserts them to have such and such a significance. Now, in what way can it vindicate such an assertion except by having a majority of the electors to agree with it. The particular appeal is to the electors of Vancouver, upon the endorsement of one of their representatives who has consented to enter the government which, according to the Times, has transformed the confidence of the country into disapproval. It is for the purpose of such an appeal that the valuable custom of re-election prevails. Now, all we ask is that if the appeal is made in vain, the Times should cease to talk about the crimes of the McBride government, or at least invent new ones to talk about. Surely, nothing more reasonable or moderate could be requested of anyone? This Vancouver election is an unqualified joy to us. By taking up the attitude that the McBride government was unrighteously in power, and that the country was against it, after the country had shown by ocular demonstration that it was not, the Liberal party was inveigled into an entirely false position, of which this Vancouver election is the result. There is not a Liberal in Vancouver whom the outermost thong of the party whip cannot reach, who will vote for the Liberal candidate. Perhaps those whom it can reach are many in Vancouver. We do not doubt they are. But they are not nearly numerous enough to carry the Liberal candidate to victory. Most politicians talk about the "country" and the "people" before the "country" and the "people" have given their verdict. It is reserved to the British Columbia Liberals to continue to talk about the "country" and the "people" being with them after they have conclusively shown that they are not, a habit which has led them into the difficulty of being obliged to make a fight in a perfectly hopeless constituency. We know of no position in which we would more gladly see the Liberal party in British Columbia. The result may teach it something it should have known before.

FAILURES.

During the ten months from January to October, liabilities in bankruptcy in the United States amounted to $122,267,878, as compared with a total of $85,870,278 during the same period of last year. The significance of these facts is not appreciated until we compare the returns of the month of October with the month of October last year, and with the previous months of this year. In October of last year the liabilities were $8,961,154 as compared with $34,390,902 this year. While in September of this year they were $9,499,586. The October liabilities are more than double those of any previous month of the year. The question is, of course, whether the casualties in October have been due to special and local conditions, or whether they are forerunners of widespread disaster. That is a question which is seriously exercising the minds of our neighbors, and is being variously answered by them. In Canada similar liabilities show a slight increase over the corresponding month of last year, but nothing abnormal or at all comparable to the somewhat startling statistics with which the United States presents us.

PANAMA IN POLITICS.

It appears that the great Democratic party of the United States, inspired by the advocates of the Nicaragua canal route, and the influences which do not wish any canal constructed at all, is ready to see all kinds of moral turpitude in the relations between the United States and the new government of Panama. The facts are that the people living on a neck of land whose interests were entirely distinct from the people of Colombia, had these interests exploited by the people of Colombia, to the advantage of the people of Colombia and to their own great detriment. They revolted and established a little government of their own. Instead of permitting a sanguinary and revolting struggle between decrepit Colombia and puny Panama, the United States recognized the new government and is extending moral support to it. The reason why the Democratic party objects to this action of the United States is not because a liberty has been taken with international law, if such a liberty has been taken, but because anarchy on the isthmus of Panama would have indefinitely blocked the construction of the Panama canal. Certainly Colombia owned the isthmus of Panama, but it did not own the people living upon that isthmus and possessed no moral right whatever to exploit them. It may be that a narrow legal view of the matter condemns the action of the United States. But the interests of the people of Panama, the interests of the United States, the interests of civilization, and the broad interests of justice approve. We maintain this position emphatically. We do not take the attitude that because the United States, or, we should say, some newspapers and people in the United States, advocate continued brigandage against the integrity and independence of Canada, it is our business to make out that the government of the United States is rapacious and immoral. Nor would we use the language of politicians in the United States against their government, as a stick to beat that government on an occasion on which it is our firm opinion that it has acted with prudence and commendable despatch.

SCATTERED MINISTERS.

Our Ottawa correspondent yesterday indulged in the somewhat cryptic phrase, "Ministers are scattering today." It naturally arouses interest in the meaning of this scatteration of the cabinet. There is a wealth of meaning in it. When the ministers gather together again the date of the Dominion elections will be fixed. The ministers have gone out on a voyage of political discovery. They have been cooped up in Ottawa so long, that they have not been able to satisfy themselves whether the alarmist reports occasionally brought in are true or not. So they have scattered to their various political bishopricks to discover how the wind of public opinion is blowing. We do not envy the ministers upon their errand. Some men are congenitally incapable of estimating public opinion, and no man can under all circumstances guage it correctly. But men who are incapable of estimating it at all seldom or never rise to be cabinet ministers. Nor in the secrecy of cabinet councils is there the same necessity of bolstering up a failing cause by a bold front. The ministers will be entirely lacking in political perception if they do not discover that the wind is blowing upon them in a somewhat chilly fashion and that the sun of popular favor is suffering eclipse. So far as the date of the elections is concerned it is hardly conjecture to say that the leaders of the Liberal party are divided into three classes. The first, of those considers an election had better be brought off at once, because victory is secure. The second of those considers an election had better be brought off at once, because, although things are not altogether favorable, they are not likely to improve. While the third thinks it should be delayed because the situation is bad at present, but hopes that something may turn up to improve. This mission of the ministers will pretty well eliminate the first class. No man who studies the public opinion of Canada in different parts at first hand, with any intelligence can come to the conclusion that the next general elections mean a certain victory for the Liberal party. Therefore one result of this mission will be to divide the leaders of the Liberal party into two classes instead of into three, those who wish the election brought on, because things will get worse instead of better, and those who wish it delayed because things may improve. Which of these two parties will carry the day we do not know, but we sincerely hope it will be the latter. A government on the down grade in popular estimation never recovers lost ground. Just as if we lose faith in, and become antagonistic towards a man, we are apt to think that all he does is wrong, even although many of the things he does are right, and many neutral; so when the people lose confidence in a government, it cannot please them, even in the inauguration of measures of wise policy. The Laurier government is on the down grade, and the longer it delays before appealing to the country the further down it will slide.

ONE U. S. VIEW.

We do not think a stronger argument for Mr. Chamberlain's imperial policy was ever penned than that contained in the words of Mr. A. B. Cummins, Governor of Iowa. He is warmly advocating a reciprocity treaty with Canada: "Joseph Chamberlain," he says, "sees the future with a clearer vision than his associates, and ere long his plan will be the plan of the English administration. He knows that if England were to impose a duty upon the agricultural imports from the United States and permit those same exports from Canada to enter free, and thereby induce Canada to raise still higher her barriers against the United States in manufactured articles, and lower still more the barriers against the imports from England in manufactured articles, he would at once deprive the United States of its best customer, promote the business of the English manufacturer, and bind the colony to the Mother Country with chains of enduring strength. We must thwart the designs of Great Britain, and reciprocity is our most effective weapon." His idea is that before reciprocal relations are established between Great Britain and Canada, the United States should endeavor to establish reciprocal relations between Canada and herself which would render a closer commercial tie within the Empire impossible. It does not appear to have entered into this sapient gentleman's head that Canadians are quite as capable of clearly appreciating the issue as he is himself and are prepared, if necessary to make sacrifices for the Empire, but under no circumstances to make a sacrifice of the Empire.

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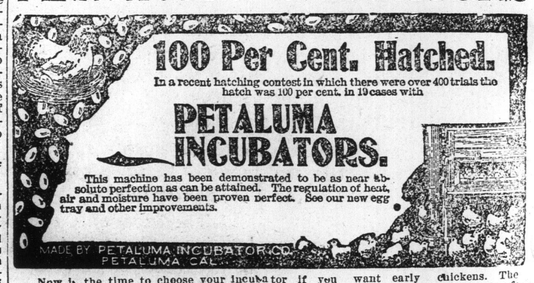

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