

The Colonist.

THURSDAY, DEC. 8, 1898.

THE HOUSEHOLDER VOTE.

What is the meaning of the expression "rent value"? In the section providing for what is called the householder vote? The validity of many recent registrations turns upon the answer to this question. We do not suppose for a moment that the legislature in point of fact intended that the section should permit a wife living with her husband, or daughters living at home and helping their mothers with the household work, to qualify under it. But it is impossible to ascertain what was in the minds of the legislators. We can only look to the words employed in the statute for guidance. A person occupying part of a dwelling and yielding or paying rent value to the amount of \$50 per annum therefor is entitled to vote.

It is evident at first reading that there will be a great diversity of opinion as to what these words mean. It would not be easy to employ words of looser signification. Undoubtedly a person who occupies a room and pays \$5 per month for a full year comes within the scope of the section. It would seem to be equally clear that a person who gives what may be regarded as the equivalent of \$5 per month for a full year is also entitled to vote. The question which arises is who shall determine what shall be considered as a yielding of rent value. If any person chooses to make the required oath, the assessor has no option except to take the paper and enter the name. He is not directed to make any investigation, nor is he authorized to refuse to register the name of an applicant. The act says that the list shall be corrected and revised and certified as correct by the mayor, but it does not vest him with any authority to investigate the validity of claims to vote. He is not clothed with any judicial functions at all. How, then, can he pass upon an applicant? He is not authorized to take evidence. Can he then go behind the application filed by the applicant? Presumably he could be restrained by the court from certifying to a list improperly made up; but this would apply to the whole list, and would not appear to authorize him to certify to an amended list. The mayor has only such powers as the statute gives him, and he must execute them within the time and in the manner prescribed by the statute.

The way the matter seems to stand, the individual conscience of the person registering appears to be the only court to which there can be an appeal, unless the mayor is restrained from certifying to the list as a whole and thereby disqualifying those persons who are legally entitled to be upon it. Unless the statute gives him power to pass upon the validity of claims, he could be enjoined by the court from so doing. If it be said that there can be no objection in requiring him to correct, revise and certify the list, unless he has the right to examine into the validity of each registration, the answer is that if the legislature chose to direct him to do so, there is nothing more to be said about it. The propriety of limiting his power to an inspection of the applications was for the legislature to decide, and the court cannot supplement the statutory provision by reading into the law powers which the express language of the act does not convey or carry with it by necessary implication.

A MINING RUSH.

According to a Spokane mining man, a great mining rush is due next year. He says that these rushes come every ten years, and therefore says with the year ending with a 9. Thus the first great California rush was in 1849. The Fraser river rush was in 1859. The rush of 1869 was to Nevada, being started by the Comstock discovery. In 1879 Colorado and New Mexico were the scenes of the rushes. In 1889 Colorado and old Mexico saw the miners come in crowds. From these precedents he anticipates a great year in 1899.

Perhaps some of the so-called ten-year rushes may be a little far-fetched, or rather there have been other rushes between the years mentioned, quite equal to those which are claimed to support the proposition of a nine-year cycle; but there is evidence enough that next year will be the scene of an extraordinary activity in mining, especially in the Pacific Northwest. The wonderful success of the Kootenay mines will attract the investing public. The output of the Klondike is likely to awaken anew the interest of the whole world. Adin will be the Mecca of thousands of prospectors, and a great number of other localities through British Columbia, the Yukon territory, Alaska and the state of Washington capitalists and prospectors will seek opportunities for investment or discovery.

We believe in the old doctrine of never prophesying unless you know, and so will not venture to foretell anything for 1899; but unless all signs fail, it will be a year of unprecedented activity, and the foundation of many a fortune will be laid, and the Pacific Northwest will receive an unprecedented impetus to prosperity.

The President's message read at the opening of congress on Monday is in no sense a startling document, but the occasion was hardly due that called for a very strong representation of the new issues with which the United States is confronted. Time must be allowed for the policy of the administration to ripen. The message seems to have been well received in England.

A STUMBLING BLOCK TO ENTERPRISE.

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GAOL PHYSICIANS.

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