

THE AFFAIRS OF VICTORIA.

The *British Columbia Commercial Journal* thus discusses municipal matters in its last issue:

The appointment by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council of the Royal Commission to inquire into the administration of the affairs of the city of Victoria seems to have considerably exercised the minds of the municipal council of the provincial capital. While, no doubt, they have been reading with considerable astonishment the accounts of the remarkable developments in connection with public matters of the Dominion and in parts of the Province of Quebec, the idea does not seem to have occurred to them that there was even the possibility that—though things were not criminally wrong—it was possible that affairs were not just as they should be within their own jurisdiction. In consequence, when the idea of an inquiry was broached each of them took it as a personal matter, and began to denounce the "mossbacks" and reactionaries who were not content that Victoria should prosper in any way except after their own methods and modes of thought, and, in consequence, in their spite, were bound to put obstacles in the way and seek to discredit the representatives of an enterprising people. After their first outburst of indignation appears to have exhausted itself, the "venerable gentlemen" began to make a sort of personal application of the supposed allegations, and the inquiry went round among the individual members of the Board, "Is it I?" "Is it I?" Everyone professed the utmost readiness to have everything with which he had to do thoroughly looked into, but the old gall of bitterness continually came to the surface with the result of further denunciations of those who, in the exercise of their undoubted right, had called the Lieutenant-Governor to their assistance.

However, setting aside the personal aggravation of the members it might, in the first place, be asked why should not such an enquiry be undertaken, particularly by gentlemen so well and deservedly respected for their public qualities and devotion to duty? The Chief Justice has, in the past, done the city and Province service that in all probability no other man could have discharged, and his record gives assurance to the public that without fear, favor or affection, he will perform whatever duty is devolved upon him, while the members of the Council, knowing his strict sense of justice and his keenness to take hold of facts and appreciate them in the light, not alone of law, but of equity, are sufficient guarantee that, so far as he and his colleague or colleagues are concerned, the scales will be balanced fairly and evenly, with, however, if need be, an inclination to put the best construction upon errors that might have been committed in spite of the very best intentions.

That there have been and must be errors in the various ramifications of the city's extensive operations, there can be no reason to doubt. Opinions differ widely as to the policy that has been pursued in connection with Water Works matters and the disposition of the revenue that has been received from that source. Then there arises the great question of streets and sewers with

respect to which rumor has been more than once busy. The electric lighting of the city might be an interesting branch for the commissioners to look into, while the different civic contracts for a year or two past might, if turned over, develop something, the lessons of which might enure to the future benefit of the citizens. Indeed, there is no knowing how productive this—according to some unpromising field might prove to be. In connection with this inquiry, since the aldermen have, as they say, nothing to fear, let them co-operate heartily with the investigators. In that way they will be really doing the community some service. Despite the city's wealth and the apparent immense augmentation of the value of real estate, the city credit does not stand as high in the world's money markets as it should do, or why should it be impossible to negotiate a favorable loan abroad, in default of which our funds are obliged to be deposited in Banks as security for temporary advances to tide us over from time to time.

A first-class vindication of our financial standing might have the effect of materially appreciating the value of our securities; for certain is it that it cannot be mere prejudice that has made financiers try to steer clear of our bonds and have as little to do with them as possible. The moneyed men of the old world are only too anxious to discover profitable fields for investment. They have almost an infinite amount of money that they are anxious to turn to better account, and it might be that the result of the labors of the commission will be an immense blessing. Neither the government nor the petitioners ought to be blamed for their action in this respect. The latter, who have almost their all at stake, have a right to satisfy themselves that matters are as they should be and to learn that there has been—as we all expect to discover—far more smoke than fire, while the former are only doing their duty in acceding to the wishes of so largely and deeply interested a body of petitioners. It should be forgotten by no one that the right of petition is one which every British subject holds in the highest estimation, and he is bound to exercise it whenever he deems it necessary.

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ARE telling a good story of a young man around town who, until recently, was not noted for wearing good clothes. The youth was badly smitten with the charms of a young lady and proposed. He was met with a blank refusal, so the story goes. The rejected lover told his woes to an intimate friend, who undertook to place him right with the young lady. He was told to secure one of Campbell's heavy Cheviot Suits, and try again. This he did, and was accepted. Campbell & Co. are now wondering whether the young lady married the man or the suit of clothes.

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