

The Colonist.

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THE SEMI-WEEKLY COLONIST

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WORKINGMEN

So very few of us, who live in British Columbia, are not workingmen, that the line of political demarcation that sets apart a portion of the community from the rest and calls it "Labor," seems wholly an artificial distinction with nothing to render it necessary. We are nearly all workers, whether we labor with the pick and shovel, the axe and saw, the pen, or in the management of business, and as the Colonist sees the matter, our interests are identical, although we may not always see eye to eye as to the best methods of advancing them. Therefore when we find a distinct political party organized and calling itself the Labor Party, we are naturally desirous of understanding why any section of a community of workers should think that it has interests so apart from the remainder that it must needs form a party to promote them. We are unable to see the necessity for such action in this province, even if we adopt the narrow meaning of the word "labor" which applies it to persons who work for daily wages at manual occupations. There is certainly no part of Canada where conditions, legal and otherwise, are more favorable to such persons than they are in this province. If, indeed, they are not more favorable here than anywhere else in the Dominion. At the same time, we would be the last to question the right of any section of the community to form itself into a political party, much as we might be disposed to question the judgment shown at this particular time in doing so.

No people suffer more by disturbed conditions than those who identify themselves with "Labor movements." If there is any class in the province, who are interested in seeing business carried on under favorable conditions, it is they. The steadier business is the better and more certain is the pay roll. In this respect their case is identical with that of the mercantile class, and in one way of looking at it, it is identical with wage-earners on all questions affecting the general prosperity of any country to be found standing side by side. Both need such political conditions that the public credit will be good and there will be no disturbances to unsettle the minds of investors. This is particularly the case in British Columbia, where such a large proportion of the pay-rolls are contingent upon the investment of outside capital. We grant that we are rapidly approaching a time when we will become more and more independent of outside investors, but we are a long way off. There is not the slightest doubt that if anything should occur to renew the disturbed political conditions which existed up to a few years ago, the first people to feel the injurious effect would be the wage-earners. We believe that the great majority of the Labor vote is composed of men of sound judgment and good general information. If this were not the case, they would long ago have been led astray by fanatics, of whom there are always a great many, ready to promise anything and too often self-deluded by fanciful theories. But hitherto the Labor vote has discounted all such fancy tales. We submit that there never was a time in the history of the province when it is more necessary to do this than now. A Labor man's vote is as valuable to him as the vote of the capitalist is to his possessor. In the coming election every wage-earner will have an equal voice in determining the immediate future of the province with the highest individual in the country. It would be a great pity to give such a vote for the advancement of some particular fad in political economy, or in the hope of securing a seat in the legislature of some man, who claims in an especial manner to represent wage-earners. Let every workingman ask himself the question: What have I or those who look to me for support to gain by bringing about a political change in British Columbia at the present time? Let him honestly decide if there is any real measure of reform in which he is interested, that is not just as likely to be advanced by retaining the present government in power as by contributing to its defeat.

The Labor Party cannot hope to secure a majority at the next House. The most that can be hoped for is by even the most sagacious of that party is that they may elect a sufficient number of members to be able to dictate to which party comes out of the elections with a majority. We do not think this a position that any workingman, who properly appreciates what is due to himself and the cause, for which he stands, ought to be willing to occupy, and it is a state of things that is full of danger to the province. We believe these views will commend themselves to many of the workingmen, and that for such and other reasons, a very great many of the wage-earners will believe it to be in the best interest of the community that they should cast their votes for the Conservative candidates.

WHY MAKE A CHANGE?

We can assure our contemporary that there is nothing whatever presumptuous in an Opposition desiring to get into office. We have always supposed that, next, of course, to the desire to promote the best interests of the province, that was one of the chief aims of all Opposition. It is not at all extraordinary that Mr. Macdonald should suppose that he would make a better premier than Mr. McBride, nor that Mr. Oliver should think that he would shine in the office of Chief Commissioner, nor that Mr. Melnes should think that he can do pretty nearly anything just a little better than anyone else. We are all but that way. Sometimes in our modesty, we say that other people are better than ourselves, but none of us really believes it. Therefore we find nothing preposterous or extraordinary or culpable in the idea in which Mr. Macdonald appears to indulge, namely that he, and not Mr. McBride, ought to be premier of British Columbia.

This is a point upon which the electorate cannot be expected to grow enthusiastic. The people know that we have a good government, and they know that the country is prosperous; they know that stable government has much to do with maintaining prosperity, and they know that under the administration of Mr. McBride things have been stable. On the other hand they have no objection to believing that Mr. Macdonald can hope to continue what Mr. McBride has begun. They have no reason to suppose that there is the least chance of the Liberals electing a majority of the House, and hence the very much greater number of voters will vote for Conservative candidates, and thus ensure a continuance of the existing highly satisfactory state of things.

Our evening contemporary says that this sort of argument is an appeal to those who like to be on the winning side. Perhaps it is but it is very much more than this. It is an appeal to sober-minded men, who would not like to see British Columbia once more plunged into political uncertainty. And this consideration is having great weight with the people. Knowledge of that fact is driving our evening contemporary into something resembling journalistic hysterics. It sees that the campaign of slander has flattened out. Like any other gas bag it has burst under the pressure put upon it—we mean the slander not the Times. The Colonist has not taken the trouble to discuss the intentions of the enemies of the government. Long experience has taught it that slanders always explode of themselves and that is what they have done in this case. The Times has talked scandal day after day, and it is the simple and undeniable truth that the people take less stock in its asseverations now than at any time since it began that line of action. The people simply do not believe the inferences which our contemporary draws from very plain and easily understood facts of public policy, which have already been fully defended upon the floor of the legislature.

If what British Columbia needs in power is men who rest upon the unwarped verifications of their opponents for support, who have never in the past given an evidence of the appreciation of the necessities of the province, we can understand why the voters should be influenced by the assertions and insinuations of our contemporary. But if what they want is that the government of the province should be carried on in that manner as has been during the past three and a half years, that is, in a manner that has restored confidence at home and abroad, they will refuse to make a change. And they are going to refuse to make a change.

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BETTER TERMS

Our evening contemporary withdraws its statement that Mr. McBride placed the claims of the province for better terms unreservedly in the hands of the Conference; but it adds that he declined to discuss the question with members of the government after he had withdrawn from the conference. Our recollection of this phase of the case is that after Mr. McBride had left the Conference, Mr. Fielding offered to supplement what the Conference was willing to give, that is \$100,000 a year for ten years, by the sum of \$30,000 a year. Mr. McBride certainly declined to accept any such sum. Just think of the position we would have been in if he had accepted that proposal. We have important claims, admitted by every one to be based upon conditions of a permanent nature. We were offered a small annual payment for ten years; this payment Mr. Fielding was willing to ask Parliament to supplement by the above named amount, and if we remember aright, he was willing to make the \$30,000 a permanent addition to our revenue. That is to say, what Mr. McBride refused was \$1,000,000 in ten annual instalments, and sufficient money annually in addition to pay interest upon another \$1,000,000 at 3 per cent. Let us suppose that Mr. McBride had been so "easy" as to accept such a proposition; will the Times pretend that it would have been satisfied? That is one way and a very good way to look at the case. Suppose, we repeat, that Mr. McBride had accepted what would not be quite equal to \$2,000,000 in hand, in full satisfaction of the claims of the province by reason of the exceptional permanent difficulties attending the administration of affairs in this province, would our contemporary, would Mr. J. A. Macdonald, would the Liberal party have said that he did right in an interview that he "did not know where he was at?" Here is an excellent opportunity for him to define his position, if he has had time enough

to decide upon his whereabouts. Let him tell the people of Victoria whether or not he thinks that Mr. McBride ought to have accepted the offer of the Conference, plus the additional sum which Mr. Fielding was willing that Parliament should grant. If Mr. Macdonald would deal with this question directly, without any phrase-making and without any dodging, we all will know where he is at.

LORD STRATHCONA

The report of the resignation by Lord Strathcona of the office of High Commissioner for Canada in London has been confirmed. It is intimated that the Dominion may enjoy the benefit of his invaluable services in connection with the British Embassy at Washington, but in the natural order of things the distinguished gentleman must shortly retire altogether from public life. The Right Hon. Sir Donald Alexander Smith, First Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, was born in Morayshire, Scotland, in 1820. He is therefore now in his 87th year. At eighteen years of age, he entered the service of the Hudson Bay Company, spending the first thirteen years of his employment on the Labrador coast. He was then, that is to say in 1851, removed to the region west of Hudson Bay. It is worth while passing in this brief story of his life long enough to endeavor to grasp what this means. The year 1851 was before the Crimean war, and Her late Majesty had only been fourteen years on the throne. Steamship communication was yet in its infancy, and its full success was regarded as rather problematical. The idea of trans-Atlantic telegraphy had not yet been broached. Railways were, as compared with what they are today, exceedingly primitive affairs. The Canadian provinces were poor in population and wealth. The idea of Confederation had been suggested by Lord Durham, but it found no acceptance from a people, who had nothing in common except their allegiance to the British crown. Only two years before Vancouver Island had been erected into a crown colony, but British Columbia was not even a name. Yet at this time Donald A. Smith was a man of 31 years, with an already arduous experience in the service of the Hudson Bay Company.

His Lordship's rise in the official list is not especially rapid, but he became Chief Factor in due course, and afterwards was made Resident Governor and Chief Commissioner of the Company. In 1860 he first came prominently before the people of Canada, when he was appointed Special Commissioner to inquire into the Riel rebellion, in which capacity he showed great courage and tact. When Manitoba was organized into a province he was elected a member for Winnipeg. He became a member of the Northwest Council, and afterwards entered the House of Commons, first from Selkirk and afterwards from Montreal West. He retired from political life in 1896, and was made High Commissioner in due course, and afterwards Privy Council for Canada. He was never very pronounced in his political affiliations, having supported both Sir John Macdonald and Alexander Mackenzie, and afterwards occupied an independent position. His greatest work in Canada has been his part in the construction of the Canadian Pacific. He had had railway experience before engaging in this enterprise, having been associated with James J. Hill and George Stephen, as he was then called, in the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway, and with Stephen and others in the New Brunswick Railway. He has also been, and we believe now is, closely identified with the Great Northern Railway. He was knighted in 1886, and in the Queen's Jubilee year was raised to the peerage.

THE CONVENTION

As has already been announced, the Liberal-Conservative Party will hold its convention for the nomination of candidates on Monday evening next. It is highly satisfactory and very significant that the chair on that occasion will be taken by Mr. R. P. Fielding. Among the business men of British Columbia none stands higher in public esteem than this long-established Victoria merchant, who, during his active and successful career, has gained a richly deserved reputation for far-seeing sagacity and lively interest in all things pertaining to the public welfare. Mr. R. P. Fielding served the legislature for a term, and during that time showed an aptitude for public affairs and an appreciation of the needs of the province in keeping with his business ability. If we are not mistaken, he was the first person to formulate in a public way the claims of this province for better terms, his speech at the House on that question being the foundation of the case for the province, as it has been identified with the case for the consideration of the Dominion government. During recent years, although maintaining very largely a public life, he has been very active in the sacrifice of the welfare of others, to absent himself from the public city, an absence which will, he hopes, be soon rendered unnecessary. This has prevented him from continuing in public life, but it has not prevented him from taking a lively interest in provincial affairs. He is personally desirous of taking a prominent part in political matters, but as a business man, who has very much at stake in the present case, and in this city, he has consented to preside at the Convention. He feels that

the present period in the history of the province is of such a character that it would be a great mistake to exchange the existing settled and highly favorable political conditions for the uncertainty that would result from a defeat of the government. Therefore, since at his personal inclination, he will occupy the chair next Monday night. During the campaign he will do his best to use the power to secure the endorsement of the government by the electorate. The prominent identification of Mr. R. P. Fielding with the government at this time cannot fail to be of a very powerful influence, not only in Victoria, but all over the province.

THE MUNICIPAL VOTERS' LIST

A good many people were very much surprised on reading the Colonist this morning to find that their names were placed on the municipal voters' list. Many of them did not know that any objection had been taken to their qualification for the voters' list, and they were surprised to find that their names should be left on the list. Probably this error arose from the fact that the persons disqualified are in point of time, not in fact, and in some cases technicality has been evoked to reduce the list as much as possible. The result of this error has been, however, of great interest to those who have not been a voter, while there are others who pay all their water rates and on the whole are not at all surprised to find themselves without a vote, because according to the construction placed upon the law, since the close of the registration they put outside of its provisions. The Colonist has been in possession of one official in which the person registering asked a question at the time if the fact that he had not paid his water rates, or that he had not paid his water rates, made any difference, because if he would go and pay them. He was told that it did not make any difference, but that he should go and pay them. He was struck off. There are other cases of this kind. We are not seeking to excuse any one for failure to pay his debts to the city, and we are not in any way attempting to use the law for purposes for which it is not intended. What we do object to is the disqualification of citizens on the ground that every citizen shall attend the court of revision to see if his name is going to be the subject of objection. It is quite possible that some of those whose names have been struck off would show very good reasons why they should be left on. The whole proceeding is extremely unfair, and it certainly is a shocking state of things that after names have made the declaration required by the law, and they have complied with the law, their names should be struck off. If it is not, the law should be amended so that it shall be otherwise.

RURAL SCHOOL TAXES

One of the Opposition complaints against the operation of the school law is that it imposes a very heavy burden upon rural communities. As practical demonstration is worth columns of theoretical discussion, it is a fair question to ask the Nicola Herald upon its operation in the two school districts in Nicola valley. "At the adjourned court of revision held at Nicola on Friday last there were three appeals against the assessment. The assessment roll this year shows a marked increase. The taxable value of property in the Nicola district is \$1,518,356. The tax on land and real property amounts to \$16,417 and that on personal property to \$2,000, or practically twenty thousand dollars, which is decidedly a very fair contribution from Nicola valley to the revenue of the province.

In the school districts of Nicola and Lower Nicola the assessed value of property are \$370,430 for Nicola and \$384,435 for Lower Nicola. The rate of assessment for these respective school districts is of the lightest, that for Nicola being three-fourths of a mill and for Lower Nicola three-eighths of a mill. These light rates for rural school districts press but lightly on the ratepayers, and will remove a great deal of misapprehension in reference to the probable cost of school houses, and for Lower Nicola three-eighths of a mill. The new law not only is a far better arrangement for the rural districts than that which has replaced it, but the charge imposed upon the ratepayers is so small as scarcely to be worth consideration.

Mr. Macdonald wants to know why the land grant to the B. C. Southern has not been taxed. He ought to know that the land cannot be legally taxed if he does not, he ought to inform himself as to the facts. If he knows the facts, he ought to be ashamed of himself for making an attack upon the government on that score. Our esteemed friends the ex-members of the legislature from Victoria have made some references to the Songhees and Shuswap, and complain of the action of the government in respect to it. If it were not we should like to see the government at Ottawa, in which the member for this city has a seat, has not found out some way of solving this vexed question. But the question ought not to be made a political one, so we will say nothing more about it.

CLAIMS VS. FACTS

It is seldom that a title as completely fits the article above which it is closely identified with the long editorial in Thursday's Times of which it was the heading. The ingenuity of the writer, however, is so complete a more complete series of claims antagonistic to the facts than those who are to be taxed, and it is not out of intention to follow the Times through its series of inaccuracies, but to show up one by one of them and from these the Colonist readers can form some idea of the ground that can be placed in the remainder of the article.

In its reference to "Better Terms," it says that Mr. McBride "placed our case in the hands of the Conference." It is hard to know how to characterize a statement of this kind, but it is not out of intention to publish what it knows is untrue, but it is not out of intention to give two alternatives possible, and they are either to charge the Times as above with a gross misstatement of fact, or to admit that it is wholly ignorant of what did transpire. The latter alternative is a difficult one to accept, because our contemporary published the actual facts in its own columns, but as there is no accounting for the vagaries of some newspapers, possibly the astounding inaccuracy may be attributable to inexactness of memory. Why did Mr. McBride submit the case of the province to the consideration of the Conference at all? The answer is because Sir Wilfrid Laurier asked him to. The Premier in his address to the Conference, which the Times has printed as well as the Colonist, said that whether or not Mr. McBride's suggestion of an impartial tribunal should be adopted might very well be considered by the Conference, and he stated that the recommendation of the Conference on that point would have great weight with the ministry. He added that he "strongly advised" Mr. McBride to place the case of the province before the Conference. It is to be assumed that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was honest in what he said; at least the Times will hardly ask us to believe otherwise. The answer is justified in acting upon Sir Wilfrid's advice, and in doing so he is doing what the whole case of the province before the Conference, he was simply following advice, which the Liberals will hardly ask the people of British Columbia was not given in good faith. If it suits the purpose of the Times to let Sir Wilfrid's Premier was laying a trap for Mr. McBride. It must take the responsibility of so doing, and must either do this, or else admit that the last named gentleman accepted the advice of the former in good faith and took the only line of action open to him. But even after this, Mr. McBride will not permit the case "unreservedly" to the Conference. He made a strong plea for its reference

to an independent tribunal or falling in with the former suggestion of an impartial tribunal, or in some other way, the province. No action was taken until the proposal of the case until the following day, when the Conference first of all resolved that the claim ought not to be submitted to an independent tribunal, and then that \$100,000 a year for ten years should be offered to the province. At the time this was done, Mr. McBride was not at the Conference. He had presented his case, and three chairmen of the Conference were in a position to say immediately after the last named resolution had passed that Mr. McBride would not accept it. These are the facts of the case, as given in the official record, which the Times has published, and yet in the face of them our contemporary has the effrontery to say that Mr. McBride placed our case unreservedly in the hands of the Conference. Surely after such a showing as this the Times can hardly expect any statement that it may make to be received without absolute proof. If it will ask its readers to believe things, which it has already disproved in its own columns, if it will ask them to accept as statements of facts things, which it has already disproved in its own columns, we will place upon anything that it may say upon any subject?

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We give 30 days' free trial
If at the end of that period you are not satisfied, all you have to do is return the razor to us in good order and we return your money.
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Public Notice

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HENRY O. CASE, C. M. C.

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COLONIAL BISCUITS, per lb. . . . . 35c
WEE PET BISCUITS, per lb. . . . . 35c
MILK BISCUITS, per lb. . . . . 35c
WINE MIXED BISCUITS, per lb. . . . . 35c
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EVAPORATED PEACHES, per lb. . . . . 25c
EVAPORATED PEARS, per lb. . . . . 20c
EVAPORATED NECTARINES, per lb. . . . . 20c

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WINE AND SPIRIT MERCHANTS, 111 GOVERNMENT ST. FRESH AND DRIED FRUIT IMPORTERS.

Public Notice

The Municipal Council of Saanich will hold a Court of Revision of the voters list on Saturday, January 12th, 1907, at 10 o'clock a. m., in the Municipal Office, Grand Avenue, at 10 o'clock a. m.
HENRY O. CASE, C. M. C.

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