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TO THE ELECTORS.

—OF—

Victoria City Electoral District.

Gentlemen:—The general election now being near at hand, and being a candidate for re-election, I wish to place my views on some of the questions commanding your attention, as well as to intimate the line of action which I shall take and the measures which I shall, if opportunity permits, support and maintain.

The party now in power have practically held office for over eleven years. Their policy has been an indefinite one on many of the questions requiring consideration. At the last general election the Opposition advocated reform in the land laws of the province, and have been able to make some important changes.

The privilege of allowing speculators and non-residents to take up large tracts of land has been taken away and the lands are now available for actual settlers.

By the efforts of the Opposition the assessment of the wild land has been much increased; the ad valorem principle of assessment according to the land value, is now the law.

There are two essential matters yet to be carried out in connection with encouraging of agricultural settlers. First, the surveying of available lands for such a purpose and giving the necessary information by the Lands and Works Department; second, the making of roads to such settlements, so that the farmer may be able to bring his produce to market—such a policy as this must be adopted in order to develop and encourage the farming industry of our province. By so doing we shall add much to our wealth and prosperity.

The railway policy of the Government has not been a business-like one. From the time of the grant given to the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway down to the Nakusp and Slocan deal, the interests of the province and the welfare of the people have not been well guarded. On the one hand a corporation receives a large subsidy and an immense tract of land, free from taxation forever; on the other, a private company is subsidized by guaranteeing the bonds to the full cost of the road as well as interest on the same for twenty-five years. One cannot but come to the conclusion that a Government policy of such a character is likely to bring the credit of the province into disrepute.

Monopolies of any kind are to be deplored, but monopolies backed by Government aid and support are often the most difficult to overcome. Government aid to such an extent as has been given in the instances referred to precludes other roads from being assisted or built. As an instance of this we recognize the difficulty of the British Pacific Railway will have in dealing with the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway and its existing rights. Thus by the action of the present Government in the past it looks as if the province were at the mercy of ringsters and monopolists who are despoiling the people of their heritage.

I am opposed to the executive using its power to make large appropriations of money by special warrant for roads, streets, bridges, and public works, without first submitting such to the Legislature. Such a course of action leads to favoritism and corruption and is not in accord with the principles of constitutional government.

I have advocated, and will continue to do so, the reduction of taxation on improvements and the abolition of taxes on mortgages. The latter impost presses doubly hard upon the borrower, and the repeal of this law would be in the interest and for the advancement of the province.

The practice followed on the eve of a general election of promising aid to public works and institutions by members of the executive should be condemned, as it is attempting to bribe the electors, with their own money. The independent electors should answer this by sending men to the Legislature who will do their utmost to remove such ministers from power.

During the past four years legislation has been brought about, chiefly by the Opposition, in reforming the School Law. The residents of the cities have now greater power over the management of their schools, and more is yet desired in this particular. I shall use my best endeavors to bring this about, so that our schools may be free of all political influences.

I have also advocated further restriction on Chinese immigration and the employment of Chinese by any company seeking charters or grants from the Legislature. I have advocated and still maintain that a clause should be inserted in all bills giving such privileges or aid to prevent the employment of this class of labor.

I also have advocated the necessity of employing residents of the province instead of non-residents or foreigners in the prosecution of all works or contracts let by the government.

It is impossible in an address of this kind to touch on all questions affecting the province. I hope, however, before long to have the opportunity of addressing the electors in public meeting, at which time I will refer to matters more extensively.

Hoping that my past record as a representative in the Local Legislature has been acceptable to you, I again seek your votes and support.

I remain, yours respectfully

G. L. MILNE

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

In all of Persia there are only twenty miles of railroads.

A locomotive lasts fifteen years and earns about \$300,000.

Every country in Europe considers secret marriages illegal.

One-seventh of the territory of France is composed of forests.

Bricks said to be from the tower of Babel are plentiful at Birs Nimrud, Babylonia.

The silkworm is the most useful insect. Five million persons are constantly employed in its production.

Horses are so cheap and plentiful in Chili and Buenos Ayres that even the beggars ride on horseback.

At Corunna, Spain, is the oldest lighthouse in the world. It was built nearly eighteen hundred years ago.

Steel barrels, made from sheets ranging in thickness from one-sixteenth to a quarter of an inch, are coming into use.

The Japanese take a hot water bath daily. If they are too poor to have a bath in their home, they patronize the public baths.

ELECTRICITY THE COMING POWER.

The coal fields, with all their vastness, cannot stand for many generations more the drain to which they are now subjected. For years the question has been gravely asked, what will our descendants be able to substitute in their place? The one great hope has been that a way

would be found to harness the waste forces of Nature—the winds, the waves, the waterfalls and the sun's energy which is received by the earth and again dissipated into space. The near approach to completion of the gigantic experiment undertaken at Niagara looks as if a successful solution of the problem has been reached. If the power of those falls can, through the agency of electricity, be economically distributed over a radius of one, two, or, perhaps, three hundred miles, what may not result from future developments in this line? The power of running water can be found in almost every section of the country. The power of wave action extends for thousands of miles along our coasts, and the power of the wind is everywhere. Coal has already ceased to reign alone in its old domain, and may soon cease to be king.

Throughout the country electric trolley roads are extending with marvellous rapidity. Scarce a village of any note but has its trolley railroad. From motives of economy wires for furnishing power have been in many instances connected with the trolley wires, having ground or earth returns; this is, perhaps, as dangerous a mode of use as any which can be adopted for electrical wiring and the distribution of power, and in no case should it be permitted. The use of the trolley itself in thickly-settled towns is a source of danger such as is believed by many cannot very long be tolerated. Using the earth as a return circuit disseminates an amount of electrical current reaching water pipes and gas pipes, and gradually working their destruction, which must lead at no distant date to an entire change of system either by the substitution of storage batteries, or by a return wire in place of the ground connection. Latterly, the use of electricity has been extended to include many household purposes, it being adapted for heating, cooking, heating of sadirons and curling irons, involving new dangers, which require new safeguards to be adopted, in addition to the rules and requirements for the general use of electricity.

In view of the position which this new power is so rapidly assuming, too much study and care cannot be devoted to the applications of electricity by the fire underwriters. To attempt to check its progress would be as futile as an effort to dam that same Niagara. The people are bound to utilize electricity regardless of insurance. The only thing which can be done is to make its use consistent with safety.