The Colonist.

MONDAY, APRIL 3, 1899.

THE YUKON CHARGES.

While regretting that circumstances justified the extraordinary charges made in the House of Commons by Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, we applaud the courage called for in taking such ground in so public a manner. It is not too much to say that Sir Hibbert has taken his political reputation in his hands when he presents to parliament such a terrible indictment. He must be very confident of his ability to make his allegations good. The statement regarding Major Walsh's moral conduct is not new to the Colonist. It has been reported to this paper on more than one occasion by persons of good repute; but as none of our informants were prepared, for reasons which can be discovered without much ingenuity, to assume the responsibility of associating their names with their statements, we refrained from making any reference to the matter. We assume that Sir Hibbert has possessed himself of ample evidence to make good what he has said. It is a very serious matter. That a federal officer, occupying virtually the position of governor of the Yukon, should so conduct himself is highly discreditable, and while it may be said that the Minister of the Interior could not be supposed to watch the morals of the employees of the department, it is nevertheless true that he must be held accountable to the public for having placed such a man in office.

It is certainly a matter of surprise, as Sir Hibbert said, that the government took no steps towards a thorough investigation of the Yukon scandals, but have left them in such a condition that they are certain to form a subject of bitter debate during the present session. The Colonist pointed out long ago that the instructions to Mr. Ogilvie to make an investigation came too late to be of any special service either in punishing the guilty or in removing suspicion from the innocent.

The issuance of liquor permits is a matter that has been a prolific source of complaint, and the charges of favoritism in regard to mining locations and transportation have been very numerous. The conduct of Mr. Wade has been the subject of the gravest possible criticism and the official crookedness in connection with the Gold Commissioner's office has already been related time and time again. In view of the seriousness, frequency and authoritative character of the charges made, the failure of the government to institute a probing inquiry cannot be explained away. It was not sufficient for Mr. Sifton to ask people to prefer charges. He knows, or he ought to know, that private individuals are not inclined to constitute themselves informers. He knows, or he ought to know, that there is a certain degree of risk in preferring charges against officials, in a community where such important interests are at the mercy of the officials as in the Yukon. Under these circumstances the duty of the Minister was to have directed an independent investigation, not into specific charges made, but into the whole administration of the Yukon. If he had done this, doubtless much more would have come to light than will ever be ascertained now. Sir Hibbert having taken the matter up will doubtless not allow it to rest where it is, although there is not much that he can do with a government majority against him, except to appeal to the bar of public opinion.

Some reference must be made to the Postmaster-General's very extraordinary statement that mail communication with the Yukon had been regular. As we do not feel like questioning Mr. Mulock's veracity, we shall have to be content with saying that he is the most misinformed man on the American continent in regard to the Yukon mails. The instances that could be cited to show everything said by Sir Hibbert on this point to fall very far short of the full truth are innumerable. There never was anything worse than the so-called mail accommodation of the Yukon. The Colonist has not been specially desirous of magnifying official misdoings in that country, for it has appreciated very fully the difficulties to be contended with. But it has found itself compelled very frequently to point out how scandalously incompetent was the postal management of the northern country. There could have been nothing worse, except a refusal to provide any sort of accommodation at all, and in some respects that provided was worse than none, for it led to no end of disappointments and losses.

ARCHITECTURE IN VICTORIA.

The Canadian Architect and Builder has an article on Victoria, from which we reproduce some extracts. In so doing we wish to premise that it is difficult to understand why a person, writing from the standpoint of an architect, feels called upon to deal in the language of gross exaggeration. The article opens as follows:

On first entering Victoria, the visitor is not very favorably impressed, for should he arrive on an ocean steamer he is landed at the outer wharf, nearly two miles from the centre of the town, and is hurried along in his cab past the chemical works, flour mills, lumber mills, etc., that line the banks of the harbor hereabouts; he catches a fleeting glimpse of the provincial government buildings, which are on his right, as James Bay bridge comes into sight on his left front, with its unsavory adjunct, the reclamation. Very slowly and cautiously he is driven across the dilapidated old bridge which is in the last stages of decline, thence bumpity-bump over the worn-out macadam of Government street to his hotel. Should our traveller arrive coastwise from Puget Sound ports or from Vancouver, he is discharged (that is the most suitable term) on a dirty wharf crowded with a rather tumble-down lot of buildings, and picks his way up the steep outlet to fall into the hands of a yelling mob of hotel and cab touts. To reach Government street he turns abruptly into Bastion street, passes the positively hideous court house, and so on to his destination.

This is hardly fair. The road from the outer wharf is not nearly as much calculated to create an unfavorable impression as the writer says. James Bay bridge is not dilapidated. We do not feel called upon to deny the statement about the depressing effect of the inner wharves upon a visitor, and have frequently insisted that Bastion street ought to be improved. Neither will we attempt to defend the court house from an architectural point of view, but surely it is unfair to say that it gives a visitor an unfavorable impression of the city. The following paragraph is also a gross exaggeration:

We refrain from giving his (the visitor's) criticisms of the variegated sidewalks, with their playful habit of suddenly letting the wayfarer down a foot or two when he steps on the loose end of a plank—the other end jumping up at him in an alarmingly threatening manner; neither do we judge it wise to repeat his vitriolic comments on the spikes which "stub" his toes and threaten to trip him up.

Speaking of the buildings throughout the city, the writer says the first to give relief from "the prevailing mediocrity" is the Bank of Montreal, which he finds "a well-handled little piece of English Renaissance in its modern interpretation." The Five Sisters' block, he says, shows "refined detail throughout, marred by its execution in painted metal." The Bank of British Columbia is described as "not lacking a certain dignity, but rendered trivial by its overload of cement and metal ornament, some of which is flimsy." The Bank of British North America is mentioned as quaint and free from tawdriness. We protest that the following is worse than absurd:

The Board of Trade building and the new home of the Colonist newspaper are attempts in that species of American architecture which is described by the ubiquitous reporter as "that splendid block" or "that handsome structure," both having much of the swaggering, braggadocio, painted sand, galvanized iron, rock-faced stone and tuck-pointed brick genus of features, which may be more but generally are less original and cannot be deemed architectural.

Hitherto we had supposed that these two buildings were rather modest structures, capacious but not pretentious. The following will be read with interest and some difference of opinion:

The new post office and custom house occupies a fine sight commanding the approach to Government street from the James Bay bridge, and is a big solid mass of stone-work, three stories in height, with a great mansard roof. The whole is bold in appearance, designed in characteless version of modern French Renaissance, but very coarse in detail and untinteresting; the post office has a pannelled ceiling, heavy in effect and certainly not beautiful; the screens are quite ugly, and the upper portions filled with a vulgar sort of stock pattern description of stained glass, contrasting strangely with the huge radiators, built of stacks of uncompromisingly utilitarian iron pipes, gorgeously arrayed in gold paint. The building as a whole is a fair type of Dominion government official architecture, and causes one to deeply regret that this sort of work is not offered to public competition with assessors of known ability and undoubted professional standing, in the manner now commonly adopted by public bodies in the Old Country, to the great gain of the British public and of architecture.

Weiler Bros.' new building is unpretentious and "distinctly refreshing," and the Driard Hotel as not entitled to recognition from an architectural point of view. This is all the writer has to say of the churches, and we think is very unjust, and it also is extremely incomplete:

Though the street architecture of Victoria is not particularly ambitious or interesting, her churches, though more pretentious, are scarcely more successful efforts in design; the Roman Catholic church is of considerable dimensions and bears evidence that its author had a general acquaintance with a certain phase of modern gothic, but that he was not intimate with ancient work, the conventional foliage, the moldings and details generally being the rocks upon which he suffered pretty complete shipwreck. An extraordinary edifice in an exaggerated form of the "rock-faced" mania, with tin pinnacled buttresses and a roof the grouping of which baffles all efforts to elucidate, is the proud possession of the Methodists. The Anglican cathedral is an unpromising box with the all too customary hollow buttresses of "rustic" and a square tower with parapet, all of the same hopeless style; the interior, though a modern travesty of a stone construction, has a certain ecclesiastical feeling which is heightened by a good stained east window and a pulpit rail and reredos in oak too evidently new and too good for the building.

When he gets clear of the business part of the city, the writer changes his tone. We quote:

But it is in her residential and suburban architecture that Victoria shows to best advantage, and it is a pleasant change to leave the business portion of the town and wander along the roads, with their oak trees and wild roses, the bracken and the broom growing luxuriantly up to the very macadam. There are to be found many charmingly designed houses with a home-like, cosy air about them that is really delightful; the close-cropped bright green lawns, the well-grown hollies, birches, poplars and spreading oaks, the laurels, box-hedges, roses, and the wandering, rambling, dark green ivy, all combine to create a resemblance to English houses so often claimed for many Victoria homes; as there is perhaps nothing so altogether enchanting as a certain type of English country house, this is no small praise; better still, it is not altogether undeserved.

Victoria's gardens and the fine panoramic view of the Straits of Fuca and the Olympian range are her great glories, and indeed neither the gardens nor the view are easily excelled anywhere; the pleasant, equable climate, too, makes it possible to enjoy both of these advantages to the fullest extent. Moreover, the country round about, which is a capital mixture of cultivated and virgin land, is well intersected with roads; perhaps it is but natural that the Victorians should a little neglect the "city" for the outskirts, the attractions of the latter being duly considered.

The article contains no reference to the Parliament Building. A considerable part of it is taken up with general comments upon architectural methods, which are not of special interest.

RECENT RAILWAY LEGISLATION

We reproduce to-day an article from the Railway and Shipping World dealing with the railway repudiation act of last session. Special attention is directed to that portion of the article wherein mention is made of the effect of such legislation upon investors. No more hurtful thing can happen than that a country should get a reputation for repudiating its contracts. We pointed out yesterday how by the alien exclusion bill many foreigners, who invested their time, labor and money in this province are being deprived of the results through no fault of theirs. This railway legislation is even more injurious. Men will not place their money in a community where the legislature will not keep faith with them. The reference in the extract to Attorney-General Martin's course in Manitoba ought to be deeply pondered over by every one having the welfare of the province at heart. If British Columbia gains a reputation for dishonest dealing with capitalists, years must elapse before confidence will be restored.

PARTY POLITICS.

The Kamloops Standard says that "British Columbia cannot afford the luxury of Liberal and Conservative representatives—that is in the sense that they are party men, first and foremost." The Standard advances a proposition which has recently met with a great deal of approval in Great Britain. The Mother Country has had about a century's experience of party government as we understand it to-day. The system is a great deal older than this, but it came into its modern form shortly after the close of the American revolution, when the principle of ministerial responsibility was fully defined. Party government has not been an unqualified success. It leads those in power to minimize the maladministration of their subordinates, and those out of power to magnify the mistakes of their opponents. The keen criticism, which is like that of an advocate at the bar, to which every proposal is submitted, tends to bring out all weak points; but on the other hand, dread of criticism often renders a party averse to accepting suggestions from their opponents. On the whole, party government has been a success, perhaps the most successful form of government known in modern times, but it has its objectionable features. It is very objectionable when it is allowed to interfere with the public welfare. As a rule it does not so interfere to any great extent in Canada. Any measure, undoubtedly in the public interest, is received generally by both parties in the right spirit and the criticism to which it is subjected usually serves to perfect it. When once the principle of a measure has been determined upon, parliament devotes itself to the perfecting of details, and in this work party feeling is lost sight of. At the same time, there is much in the idea advanced by the Standard. In a new province like British Columbia the obligation of representatives to subordinate party considerations to the public welfare is greater than in more fully developed localities, and we think our representatives appreciate this. Speaking especially of the two Victoria members, we know that, while they are thorough party men, they are prepared to sink party interests whenever it is necessary to do so in order to promote the interests of the province. We believe this spirit is shared by the other representatives of British Columbia. At least we have no reason to believe otherwise, and until some reason is forthcoming we shall hold this opinion.

A HINT TO VICTORIA.

We find in the Fort Steele Prospector a long and able article suggested by the sale of the Republic mine to Canadian capitalists, in which the writer deals with the history of Spokane as a mining centre. He points out that there is not a mine of any kind in Spokane county, and says the city derived its first impetus from the discoveries at Coeur d'Alene. The excitement over the placers at this point was at its height in 1884, and the business men of Spokane came to the front as caterers for the supply trade of that region. They were highly successful, and encouraged by this they have been foremost to investigate and invest in any new mining country that is within their reach. "You can take," says the Prospector, "the history of every mining camp discovered since 1884 and you will find the Spokane merchant and mining man were side by side in their efforts to be first in the camp of the New Eldorado. This energy, this enterprise all turned to the great mining industry of the Northwest, without regard to district or country (no distance being too far away for them to reach) always first in the new camp, is what has made Spokane the mining centre of the Great Northwest." The Prospector then goes on to say that the West Kootenay was opened by Spokane capital and "in East Kootenay, with a single exception, the principal mines that are working are being developed by Americans." We quote further:

Why should Canadian capital go abroad for investment when there is so much mineral waiting for investment at home? Are the mines any better? Are they any larger? Or is it on the outside they have had the good fortune to have an active and energetic amount of capital to push development on their prospects. If there is money in it for the American promoter to take hold of prospects and develop them into mines, why should not Canadian capital take hold of prospects and make them mines? Is it a fact that our Canadian capitalist is afraid to take the chances of making a mine from a prospect, and would rather pay from ten to twenty times the first cost of the prospect, also a large bonus on the development, than to take chances with a comparatively small amount and develop a good prospect into a paying mine?

If the mining men of Spokane had waited for outside capital to open up the Le Roi, St. Eugene, Republic or any of the larger number of mines they have operated all over the Northwest, do you suppose these mines would be producers and shippers to-day? Assuredly not. They take hold of prospects that have a fair showing of mineral, go ahead and work them, and eventually make mines of them, and then put them on the market at a large advance on the original cost of the mine and its development. It is not every prospect that makes a mine, and the mining man is well aware of the fact, but if there is the slightest chance of finding mineral they take hold and try and make a mine. The simple fact that the mining men of Spokane have been willing and have taken thes chances has been the reason of their success. They know a good thing in the mineral line when they see it, and when they take hold they push it to a finish—either dig it out and leave it for a hole in the ground or make a mine out of it. If one is no good they try another, and so on until they get one that develops into a paying mine and thus reap the reward for persistent work on what was a good prospect.

We submit for the consideration of the people of Victoria if these remarks have not special interest to them in connection with mining development on Vancouver Island. Victoria is a richer town than Spokane. Certainly it is far richer than Spokane was when it began to reach out for the mining business. Unlike the American city, Victoria has close at hand mines and prospects well worth handling. If they can be successfully developed, Vietoria will have scarcely a rival so far as the trade thus created is concerned. Why not emulate the example of Spokane? Some give as a reason that the public of this city are too comfortable as they are, that they have not the incentive of other communities to reach out for new business. Certainly the reason cannot be lack of capital, lack of commercial standing or knowledge, or lack of energy. We commend the question to the consideration of all concerned.

EASTER.

The Easter festival is an expression of faith in a future life. Belief in a future existence seems innate in mankind. Ingersoll said: "The hope of immortality will last as long as Love kisses the lips of Death," which is very prettily stated, but like many of his most beautiful phrases, it is only a part of the truth. The Universe is a scene of continual change, but so far as any one knows, there is no such thing as extinction. Matter, the scientists tell us, is indestructible. We may alter its form in a thousand different ways, but we cannot annihilate it. Force appears to be eternal. Its form may be altered indefinitely, but the energy exists and cannot be got rid of. We may not be able to follow its mutations, but we may have no reason to suppose that the limits of our observations mark the extent of its changes. Thus we know that centuries ago power came from the sun in the form of light and operated to produce vegetation. This vegetation became stored up in coal, and we use that coal to develop energy which is used as electric light. What becomes of the energy after it has been given out in the form of light we may not be able to discover, but we have no reason to suppose it is lost. The effects of our thoughts is eternal, so far as we can judge. No ingenuity can hope to follow a thought through all its effects, but reason tells us that to limit the influence of a thought must be impossible.

Everything else being eternal, although existing under various forms, it is only natural that mankind should believe the individual life to exist after the stage called death, to hold that death, instead of being the opposite to life, is simply the indication of a change in the manner of existing. To one school of Hindu philosophers this seemed so essentially true that the doctrine of Nirvana was evolved, which teaches that man by right living can lose his individualtiy, by re-absorption into the original foundation of being, but even this theory does not contemplate the extinction of that which was the individual. It continues to exist, but not as an individual. We find in all times and in all countries this belief in a future state. True there are tribes of which it is said that they have no such conception, but statements of that kind must be accepted with much allowance, for it is extremely difficult to find out what people, who are low in the state of human development, believe or disbelieve. On the other hand, the fact that every race, that has sufficiently progressed to formulate its beliefs so as to make them intelligible to others, holds to a future existence, is prima facie evidence that all races do the same Universal acceptation of a belief does not necessarily prove it to be correct, but when we find this faith in a future life instinct in humanity, we can hardly ask better proof of its truth. The instincts of hunger, thirst, hope, fear and so on are not more definite or universal than that which has led man in all ages to look forward to an existence beyond the present.

The fact that in the highest civilization Easter is most esteemed is of itself proof of the reality of the idea which it typifies. The special event commemorated by the day is so extraordinary, so utterly at variance with human experience and calls for such a degree of faith, that if the idea underlying it and the principle established by it did not commend themselves to the intelligence as well as to the instincts of mankind, the festival would have long ago been laughed out of existence. But so far from this, its hold upon Christendom grows stronger year by year. The keenest criticism has not shaken its grasp upon the minds and hearts of men. It is the culmination of the gospel of hope, that sure anchor of the soul. If the time shall ever come when the world will cease to feel its pulse stirred by the thought of Easter, the darkest hour in humanity's history will be at hand. Let it at once be universally believed that death ends all; let the whole world resolve that the story of the Risen Lord is an ecclesiastical fiction, and there will dawn an era when might alone will constitute right.

The Inland Sentinel is reminded that the Colonist's argument has been in support of the increase of Yale-Cariboo's representation, and that the fact that one district in the province is entitled to more representatives does not show that another is entitled to have its representation reduced. Why is it that the Colonist is left almost alone to demand justice to the whole of British Columbia in the matter of representation? Mr. McInnes, M. P., has a notice of motion pending, asking for further representation for the province, but not a paper in the province, except the Colonist and the Conservative Kamloops Standard, has backed up the proposition. To most of them, a change that curtails the influence of Victoria is enough glory for one year.

It has been pointed out to the Colonist that the object of the proposed restriction of the fire limits cannot be to permit the erection of the proposed paint factory, for the reason that the site of the factory is left within the limits. This is conclusive, and being so, it would be well for those who are promoting the change to explain why they think it necessary. If it is simply to enable some people to erect frame buildings for residences or shops, it ought not to be passed. Only the establishment of an important industry under conditions where the danger can be reduced to a minimum will warrant the proposed change.

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