

REDISTRIBUTION.

We think we are not exaggerating when we state it as a fact that the present system of representation of the people in the British Columbia legislature is the most absurd ever conceived by the brain of man in a country where there is supposed to be constitutional government. In fact, the object of the men who are responsible for the present distribution of seats was to so arrange the constituencies that a party, or properly oligarchy, representing a minority of the electorate, should be supported by a majority of the members and retain power, as they did for many years, although the popular majority was against them. These are the reasons for the tremendous agitation which broke out on the opposition side of the House yesterday when the subject of redistribution came up. Then they resorted to the old tactics, so universal with those who have neither reason nor justice with them, of conjuring up the evil spirit of an issue which every well-wisher of the province had hoped was at rest forever; up came the cry of sectionalism.

There are too many members in the House already for a province with the population of British Columbia. The late government, instead of increasing the representation of a House already over-represented, should have cut off a member in constituencies where there were already too many and given one to places justly entitled to representation. We hope the government does not intend to add to the House and to the expenses of a province already overburdened in that respect by increasing the representation. There are constituencies now with two members which if we were starting out anew would not be considered worthy of one. We do not know that it would be doing any injustice to Victoria and Vancouver to take a member away from them, as three members certainly could look after their interests just as efficiently as four. But no doubt such a radical departure as that would not be countenanced by either side of the House. It is most desirable, whether the government is able to pass a fair measure of distribution or not, that all questions of antagonism between Island and Mainland be avoided. We all realize now the great future that is before the Mainland, and rejoice in that knowledge, for the greater the prosperity of that section the better for us all. The Island, too, is not going to stand still. As it develops, it will sustain a great population, and while we may not hope to keep pace with the larger section in that respect, we feel assured that in securing a proportionate share of the community.

PERSONALITIES IN THE HOUSE.

The result of the discussion in the House yesterday on the motion for the formation of a committee to investigate certain charges laid against the Finance Minister confirms what we said at the time notice was given by the mover of his intentions in the matter. It was not possible that much benefit could accrue to the public from the discussion of such matters in an assembly which is supposed to confine its attention to questions affecting the welfare of the people. The discussion was provoked by the personal ill-feelings which it is known to exist between the two members from Vancouver, and we believe the matter should have been allowed to drop. However, the ill-adviced discussion has cleared the political atmosphere somewhat, for it has shown that Mr. Cotton possesses the confidence not only of his own side of the House, but that personally the leading members of the opposition have faith in the integrity of the Finance Minister. The leader of the opposition was most severe in his denunciation of that style of political warfare, and instances what he claimed to be the injustice to which himself had been subjected, to the hands of opponents and opposing newspapers. We do not think Mr. Turner could have included the Times in the list of papers which had attacked him personally, for we believe we have stated more than once that his personal and business reputation were above suspicion, and we have no hesitation in saying now that as a citizen the leader of the opposition is held in the highest esteem in Victoria. The association of his name as the Prime Minister of this province with speculative mining companies we condemned at the time as injudicious and detrimental to the best interests of the province, and in this view we were supported by the London Times and other influential British papers. The opposition waxed very indignant over these attacks yesterday, but we contend they were justifiable in the interests of the good name of the province, and that our position was vindicated by the verdict of the electors. The charges against Mr. Cotton were never openly made until Mr. Martin laid them before the House, but it was slyly hinted and mysteriously insinuated by the organs of the opposition that if they cared to speak they could a tale unfold that would amaze the people of British Columbia. Mr. Turner indignantly proclaimed himself innocent of any such meanness, and said that when a paper was sent to him containing the Denver yarn he cast it from him without even taking the trouble to read it. But he allowed his organs to continue their work, and therefore we are justified in the conclusion that the indignation he expressed yesterday was to a certain extent simulated. On the whole, the discussion did some good, for Colonel Baker's candid avowal of his conversation in London with the gentlemen whose version of the Denver business confirmed Mr. Cotton's explanation in regard to that matter proved conclusively that the general belief that the story was a "fairy tale" was correct, and although the proceedings in the House must have been exceedingly trying to the Finance Minister, he may congratulate himself that the opposition organs are not likely to again resort to such tactics.

The discussions this session have given evidence of great personal bitterness. The tone of some of the speakers yesterday revealed the fact that the members recognized the folly of this; and certainly the business before the House would be cleared up more quickly if less acerbity were introduced into the debates.

DUTY OF THE PROVINCE.

We think it will be generally conceded that the announcement of the Dominion government that any of the provinces desirous of sending troops to take part in the South African campaign should bear all the expense and take all the responsibility in connection therewith until their arrival at the Cape is only what might be expected. They could do nothing else. The control of all military matters in Canada is vested in the Federal authorities, and if further assistance be considered necessary it should come from that source. If every province in the Dominion were to conceive it its duty to raise a small army, and at the same time secure for itself a little cheap reputation for loyalty, no one could tell where the matter might end. So far British Columbia is the only province that has made an offer to raise a certain number of armed men—the others apparently have the good sense to confine themselves strictly to matters which come within their proper jurisdiction—and it is just as well that the position of the Dominion in the matter should be clearly understood. Like their brethren at Ottawa, the opposition here appear to be in danger of putting their loyalty to the basest of uses; they are in need of a candid leader like Sir Adolphe Caron to open their eyes so that they can "see themselves as others see them." If the provincial government were to contribute a generous amount to the Canadian fund for the benefit of those dependent on the men who have gone to the front they could not be accused of travelling outside of their proper field and at the same time their action would meet with general approval.

ISLAND RESOURCES.

Even if this city be unsuccessful in its efforts to secure the extension of the E. & N. railroad to the northern extremity of the Island, the agitation which the scheme has provoked cannot fail to be highly beneficial to this city and to the great territory to the northwest of it which is its proper constituency. One of the speakers at last night's meeting put the matter very concisely when he said that instead of striving after something unobtainable, Victoria should seek to develop the great resources which lie at her very door. This will never be done until our people are better informed than at present regarding the Island's latent wealth, of the very existence of which many are yet in ignorance. We were specially informed by a short time ago by a gentleman who makes a special study of mining matters, that Spokane capitalists and representatives of some of the wealthy mining syndicates in other parts of the republic have, during the last two summers, been quietly acquiring all the claims and mines on the West Coast which they could secure. Astute and cunning speculators, they keep their operations secret, knowing well that if the news went abroad that certain reputable mining magnates were investing heavily along the West Coast of Vancouver Island, the result would be a rush which would in a large measure defeat their plans. Their purposes are in a measure assisted by the residents along the Coast, who have discouraged the advent of capital by holding out for fancy prices for properties which are as yet little more than prospects. Many, too, object to a long and necessarily rough sea voyage to reach these districts, and the result has been that many of the best properties there have passed under the control of the enterprising men to whom reference has been made, who are not deterred from exploration by such trifles as an attack of nausea or a few hours' climb in the hills. But the capabilities of Vancouver Island are not confined even to the mines which are in themselves of sufficient richness to support a large population. We referred a short time ago to the immense belt of arable land about half way up the ocean coast. But further north still exist the raw materials of what is a wonderful trade will some day be developed. Chief among these is the spruce with which we are informed the country is clothed from Quatsino Sound to the north end of the Island. This timber, from which principally pulp is manufactured, is becoming very scarce, and today Canada practically has a monopoly of it. Energetic steps are being taken in the East to conserve the limits of spruce, which promise to become a great source of wealth. Forests of it exist northwest of Edmonton, a fact which has not a little to do with the proposal for a second transcontinental railway through that district. Yet the existence of great belts of this valuable

timber on our own Island has been allowed to pass with but little comment. The same district which grows this timber has the water power necessary to operate the plant which reduces it to pulp.

From Quatsino Sound across to Hardy Bay there is an immense body of coal which is just beginning to be opened up, and which promises to rival the deposits of Comox and Nanaimo. Off to the north end of the Island there exists a source of wealth in the sea, that element from which Victoria has drawn so much profit. We refer to the halibut banks, which are to-day being exploited by American schooners, and which are bringing gain to the coffers of those of another nation. Cape Scott settlers have informed us that the run of halibut off that point is phenomenal, and that Indians there fill their canoes in a few hours with them. So rich is the harvest that the Scandinavian settlers there made an effort to secure a schooner in order that they might market these, but without success. There is no reason why these fisheries may not be developed to such an extent as to at least approximate in value to Vancouver Island that of the grand banks to Newfoundland.

In another column of to-day's issue a gentleman from Quatsino refers to the establishment there of a clam-curing industry, which is about to be started, and which, from his own description of the facilities for "operating" it, should prove a remunerative venture. This itself indicates the potentialities which exist even in what may appear to be the trivial resources of the Island.

We have not referred to the fir forests of the East Coast, or the agricultural lands of the northern part of Vancouver, but have merely touched upon some matters which are perhaps not so generally known. The data which the committee will be obliged to collect for the purpose of floating the scheme cannot fail to bring out all of these facts which are now so little understood, and which form such an important feature in any consideration of the future of this city and Island.

EXTEND THE LINE.

Leaving out of consideration entirely the question of probable steamboat connections at Hardy Bay, the building of a railway to the north end of Vancouver Island is necessary as a colonization road. The resources of the Island will to a great extent lie dormant until a way is made to get at them, to bring them forth and put them at the service of mankind. The riches of forest and mine that are locked up for lack of transportation facilities are so well known now that the people of British Columbia can with perfect justification call upon the governments whose revenues will be greatly augmented by the proposed work, to grant substantial assistance in aid of the line. The governments can be informed with perfect certainty that this is no wild-cat or speculative scheme, but a movement to open up one of the richest islands in the world.

Mr. Olive Phillips-Wolley says the Colonist is, happily, edited in the interests of the Conservatives of Victoria, but in reality is edited in some other interest. Mr. Wolley's opinion of the Colonist is no concern of the Times, but we may be permitted to express the view that a newspaper should be edited in the interest of the public in the first place and in the interest of its owners in the second. If these two interests are kept steadily in view, the peculiar "interests of the Conservatives of Victoria" will never be apparent to the editor. It is about time the "parties" realized that they do not own the newspapers; also that their obligations to the newspapers are infinitely greater than the obligations of the newspapers to the "parties."

The Colonist says that the question of its responsibility if the Coal Mines Regulation bill should be defeated and Chinese be placed in all underground workings, is not very material just now. Possibly, not just now, but when several thousand white miners and their families have to leave the province as a result of the defeat of the bill it will be a very material question indeed.

SPRAYING OF FRUIT TREES.

To the Editor.—In view of the fact that an early spring may be expected, and already in warm locations the buds of fruit trees are starting growth, owners of fruit trees should lose no time in making preparations for spraying their trees. As has often been pointed out, the most efficient spraying is done while trees are in a dormant condition, and as an all round spray against insect pests at this season, there is nothing better than the No. 1 spray, or lime, salt and sulphur wash. Last season was especially favorable to the development of fungous diseases, and against these the most effective spray is the Bordeaux Mixture. It may be used with advantage of double strength just before growth starts, and will not injure the buds, this strength being 8 lbs. of blue vitriol and 8 lbs. of lime in 50 gallons of water. Every orchard in Coast districts of the province should be well sprayed with this mixture as a preventive of attack, and to destroy the germs of fungous diseases. In cases where insect pests are present, the No. 1 spray should be applied in the first instance, followed by the Bordeaux Mixture.

R. M. PALMER.

A BLOW TO MINING.

It may have been good business policy for the directors of the War Edge and Centre Star mines to close down these properties during the installation of new

machinery, but they put their decision into effect in a most brutal fashion. Had Mr. Gooderham used a little prudence or acted generously, or even justly, with the shareholders, he would have pre-arranged matters so that the announcement of the shut-down would not have caused such widespread disaster among the holders of the stock. The announcement that Mr. Gooderham issued on Monday last will have far-reaching effects on the mining industry in Canada. It will be many a day before the industry will recover from the shock, either here or abroad. And what makes it so much the worse is that the disaster could have been avoided or greatly minimized. We think Mr. Gooderham could well have afforded to make a little personal sacrifice in order to prevent such widespread evil as has followed in the wake of his brutal announcement. For it is not only investors who have been hit, but the whole country will suffer severely from Mr. Gooderham's blunder.

WHY EUROPE HATES BRITAIN.

The true reasons for European jubilation over recent British disasters in South Africa are hatred of republican England, envy of commercial England, and jealousy of colonial England. There is not a court in Europe where the English system of government, responsible to the people, which rejects the idea of the divine right of kings and derives its authority to rule and to tax from the people, is not held in official abhorrence. For more than a century England has been the sanctuary for the oppressed refugees of Europe and its free press has held the torch of liberty and popular government before the eyes of the overtaxed helpless millions of the continent.

CLOSE THE DOOR.

A law which enfranchises every native of Japan who takes the oath of allegiance is altogether too liberal to be quite safe.

Public opinion should support W. W. B. McInnes, M. P., in his attempt to close the doors through which Chinese and Japanese citizens can crawl to places on the voters' lists.

"Buller Almost Wept"

Officer Writes to a Victoria Lady Describing the Loss of the Guns.

A Graphic Account of the First Battle of Tugela River.

An interesting letter has been received here by Mrs. R. A. Humphrey from a friend, an officer of the Border Regiment, since wounded at Snioh Kop, describing the loss of the guns on the first battle of Tugela River. It is dated Pretoria, December 23rd, and is in part as follows:

"People hardly realize yet what a big undertaking this is turning out to be. Everything points to the Boers having not less than 60,000 men in the field, with guns superior to ours in range and well behind us in marksmanship, and until we get out a lot more troops there is no likelihood of our doing much more than hold them in check, unless we could get behind them or cut off their supplies in some way or other. They are undoubtedly following out a plan of campaign which they have worked out in all details in peace time, and they are carrying it out most perfectly. They have spies everywhere, and are always prepared to meet any move on our part with a view to the capture of our guns. We are exactly the reverse, and never seem to know what they are doing nor how many there are of them in any direction. We won't trust a single colonial (Cape Colony). We have a first-class topographical map of the frontier of the Transvaal, but no military map of these parts, and no one knows which hill commands another, or what kind of positions there are on the other side of the mountains facing us. We are exactly like the French in the Franco-German war, with excellent maps of the enemy's country but with none of our own. "The Boer positions are on all the high ridges and hills. They extend for miles, and command every bit of ground in front. The hills behind are all prepared for defence. If they are driven back from one position they don't have to go very far to get behind a new line of resistance. "Water is far from plentiful, and transports scarce, so we have to stick pretty well to the railway. Buller has a hard job to do on the Boer position in front of us, Colenso his defending the River Tugela, which we must cross and which is only fordable in places few and far between. We tried to do so last Friday and had a battle. "We were 20,000 and 14,000. Our Boers between 10,000 and 14,000. The brigade (5th) attacked on the left, but our brigadier made an awful mess of it, and Buller ordered him to withdraw, which we did after 523 were killed and wounded. Something went wrong with the right brigade, and the officer commanding the Royal Artillery advanced his guns up to within 700 yards of the Boer position and trenches long before the infantry were at hand to support him. The Boers allowed the guns to be unlimbered, and then poured in such a hail of bullets that the teams of two batteries were killed in a very short time. When the gunner were shot down the attack could not be carried out, and Buller had to give the order to retire. "Our total loss had to be abandoned. "Nothing! Buller almost wept and we heard to exclaim: "My brigadiers have sold me." We shall have another division here shortly, and will then have receiving reinforcements that will number not far off 20,000, and all in splendid positions. "The shrieking and bursting of shells and the roar of battle and thousands of Mausers, Lee-Metfords and Maxims last Friday was something awful. The heat was dreadful, but the men behaved splendidly."

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West Coast Industry

Messrs Leeson Establishing a Clam Canning Factory at Quatsino Sound.

The Resources of the District Discussed—Great Mineral Deposits

Just now when the Island generally and the West Coast in particular is being discussed and its resources canvassed, readers of the Times will be interested in the establishment of an industry on Quatsino Sound which is a new departure in the commercial world. This is the clam-curing factory which is being started on Quatsino Sound by Messrs. Leeson. Reference has been made to this industry before in these columns, but this morning a reporter of the Times obtained from Mr. E. W. Leeson some further particulars in regard to the venture.

The factory will be situated on Quatsino Sound, and the field of operations of the employees of the concern will be principally on the deltas and tidal flats which mark the outlet of the tributary streams of that ocean arm. When it is remembered that Quatsino Sound has a devious coast line which, following indentations, amounts to 250 miles, it will be seen that the range of operations even if confined to the Sound will be a very wide one. The plant employed will be similar to that used in small canneries, and the method of packing somewhat the same, excepting that the clams will be packed in stone jars instead of in the regulation tin ones, as is the case with salmon. The clams will be condensed from three pints to half a pound of matter, which will then be potted in the form of a paste. This can be used in the making of soups and in other ways, and it is the opinion of Mr. Leeson that a very large market can be found for the product, not only in this country, but in the old land as well.

The first shipment will be made some time in March, and the first pack will sell for 25 cents a jar. The output of the little factory at first will be ten cases a day, or about 250 jars, the factory labor being entirely performed by white men. The swishes will secure employment in collecting the clams, an industry in which they have had experience for generations.

Mr. Leeson, who is provincial constable at Quatsino, attended the public meeting last night and was naturally very much interested in the proposal to construct a line to the other end of the Island. He is of the opinion, however, that it would be inadvisable to make the terminus at Hardy Bay, that harbor being exposed to the full sweep of the gale from the northeast. Considerable outlay would be required to construct wharves and docks there. A much better anchorage, he says, will be found at Shusharty Bay, about twenty miles beyond Hardy Bay, and close to the Scandinavian settlement of Cape Scott. Mr. Leeson states that the shores of Quatsino Bay which has a coast line of 250 miles, are densely wooded with spruce, while half a dozen good water options can be obtained on the south-east arm to operate any plant constructed for the purpose of running pulp mills. The spruce belt extends all the way north of the Sound to Cape Scott, though along the east coast the timber runs more largely to fir.

At present the settlers all through that country, although able to raise fine vegetables, have no market for them, and they are consequently deeply interested in a proposal which, if carried into effect, will give them access to the markets of the coast cities. The postmaster at Quatsino last year raised turpins, among which were some weighing 28 pounds, while other vegetables attain a similar weight. There are about fifty people living at Quatsino and about eighty at Cape Scott. The West Vancouver Coal Company are opening up their property there, and the owners of eight corner properties on the Sound have been offered and refused \$25,000 for them. The climate and rainfall of the district is similar to that of Vancouver and Westminster, and though not as salubrious as that of Victoria, is delightful for about four months in the summer.

The upper end of the Island falls away in low rolling land very similar to the southern portion of it. Mr. Leeson returns to the West Coast on the next boat.

SESSION CONCLUDED.

Orangemen Wind Up Their Annual Convention—The Newly Elected Officers' Banquet Last Evening.

The annual session of the Orange Grand Lodge was resumed yesterday afternoon, when, among the business, was the election of officers, which resulted as follows: E. Brethour, G. M.; D. Donaldson, D. G. M.; R. Bell, G. M.; Rev. Dr. Reid, chaplain; D. Moffat, secretary; D. Nicholson, treasurer; E. Bush, lecturer; W. Duncan, D. of C.; Rev. J. Reid, Jr., D. G. Chap.; Rev. F. G. Christmas, D. G. Chap.; A. Anderson, D. G. secretary; John Wallace, M. W. G. P. lecturer; J. Jackson, M. W. G. L. representative. The officers-elect were formally installed by P. P. G. M. H. T. Thrift. After this an address was delivered by Rev. J. C. Speer. A review of the growth of the order in the province was also given by Sheriff McMillan, showing the great progress made since the provincial branch was first organized. The lodge donated \$10 to the Protestant Orphan Home, \$25 to the Mansion House fund, and \$8 to Miss Merritt's school for deaf and dumb children. Last evening the meeting was brought to a close by a banquet tendered the delegates by the Ladies' True Blue Lodge. A most enjoyable programme had been arranged, the toasts and selections being as follows: "The Queen"; all singing the National Anthem. Remarks by P. P. G. M. Bro. Thrift. Song by Bro. G. Grimson, "The Maple Leaf." "The Provincial Government"; responded to by R. Smith, M. P. P. "The M. W. G. L. of B. A."; responded to by J. Wallace. Song, Rev. Bro. Reid, "Rule Britannia." Address, Rev. Bro. Speer. "The Lady True Blue"; Sister Grimson. Upon the conclusion of the banquet a hearty vote of thanks was unanimously tendered the Ladies' True Blue Lodge, after which a pleasant evening was brought to a close with the singing of the National Anthem.

During the session it was decided that the Grand Lodge will meet at New Westminster on the second Wednesday in February, 1901. A grand celebration will be held in this city on July 12th, when the Orangemen will honor the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne in a right royal style. The majority of the Mainland delegates left for home on the Chatter this morning.

THE COAST TRADE.

Scarcity of Tonnage Still Causing Coal Famine. J. W. Harrison's coal circular says: During the week there have been eight arrivals of coal from Washington, 16,520 tons; four from British Columbia, 12,148 tons; two from Oregon, 970 tons; three from Australia, 8,235 tons; total, 37,938 tons. Consumers may well feel gratified at the liberal deliveries this week, as the yards last week were emptied completely of most grades. Such a fuel scarcity has never before been known, and it is very questionable if it will ever happen again, as colliery contingencies will provide against any such sufficient openings or controlling factors will permit of transport to transport their output to market. We will be materially relieved within the next 90 days by colliers now en route, and some of the transports, no longer needed for the purpose of running pulp mills, will be carrying their full cargo of coal north of the Sound to Cape Scott, though along the east coast the timber runs more largely to fir. At present the settlers all through that country, although able to raise fine vegetables, have no market for them, and they are consequently deeply interested in a proposal which, if carried into effect, will give them access to the markets of the coast cities. The postmaster at Quatsino last year raised turpins, among which were some weighing 28 pounds, while other vegetables attain a similar weight. There are about fifty people living at Quatsino and about eighty at Cape Scott. The West Vancouver Coal Company are opening up their property there, and the owners of eight corner properties on the Sound have been offered and refused \$25,000 for them. The climate and rainfall of the district is similar to that of Vancouver and Westminster, and though not as salubrious as that of Victoria, is delightful for about four months in the summer.

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