

The Colonist.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 1897.

THE EAST SHOULD ACT.

As yet there has been a surprising apathy in the East in regard to the retention of the Yukon trade by Canadian merchants. The newspapers have very generally printed the Colonist's appeal, but there the matter seems to rest. The San Francisco Examiner says that \$2,000,000 worth of goods have been already sold there to go into the Yukon. We have no estimate of the amount sold in Seattle, but one business house claims sales amounting to \$200,000 in eight days. A large amount of goods has been sold also in Tacoma and Portland. We suppose that \$3,000,000 is a moderate estimate of the sales in United States cities to persons going to the Yukon. If duty is collected on these goods the cost to the miners will be \$750,000 more. With this advantage in our favor Canada ought to do the outfitting trade, and of course the future supply trade of the mining camps. No one can tell how many thousand people will go North in the spring. If they can be shown that Canadian cities are the best places to buy their supplies, the very great bulk of the business will come here. Suppose that 10,000 people go and take with them an average of \$300 worth. This will be \$3,000,000, and the suggested average is a very low one. If 50,000 go, as most people believe will be the case, this means sales of goods anywhere from \$15,000,000 to \$20,000,000. Do not Eastern merchants realize that if this vast supply trade can be brought to British Columbia cities all the great wholesale houses and manufacturers in the East will profit by it?

There ought to be a determined effort on the part of the business men and boards of trade, backed up by the Dominion government, to demonstrate to all the world that Canadian cities are the proper places for miners to buy supplies. This fact should be spread broadcast over Great Britain, for it is likely that thousands of people will come from that country, and, if our mines are to be left open to aliens, the information should be circulated in every part of the United States and the continent of Europe. There is no time to be lost in this matter. Next year will be the great outfitting year. After that improved means of communication will enable merchants to carry large stocks to the head of the Yukon.

LOCAL POLITICS.

If we may judge from the columns of the Times, the sole hope of the opposition in local politics consists of an ability to repeat, parrot-like, vague and pointless allegations against the government. The idea of venturing to make specific charges has been wholly abandoned, but the hope is cherished that by saying violent things and saying them often enough the public can be got to think that something must be grievously wrong. The opposition fear to make specific assertions, because they know that they will be confronted with specific refutation. They have tried it, and found out to their sorrow that their pet grievances exist in the imagination.

So far as the government is concerned, the ministers may well regret the character of the campaign against them; not because it is one that is at all calculated to win, but because they are debarred from showing the baselessness of the opposition's charges. It is easy to say that such and such a minister is a booby, but it is not so easy to take up every one of his public acts and show it to be honest, for that would take an interminable time and subject him to the charge of defending what was not attacked. Surely a minister of the crown is entitled to as much fair play as a common criminal, who before he has been called upon to plead has a right to know with what he is charged. If the most miserable creature in the country were indicted for being a thief he could decline to plead to the indictment and would be discharged, because nothing specific was alleged against him. In the old law books it is said it is not actionable to say of a man "You are a thief," but it is actionable to say of him "You are a thief, for you stole my horse." Surely before Ministers of the Crown are asked to reply to assertions that they are dishonest and incompetent, they have a right to know wherein they are alleged to have done wrong or omitted to do right.

The government has everything to gain from the most rigid inspection of its policy and its ministerial acts. The statute books give abundant proof of its industry; the public accounts bear evidence of its economy; the general condition of the public service establishes its efficiency. The public service may for convenience be divided under the following heads:

- Finance.
Public works.
Administration of Justice;
Public Lands.
Agriculture.
Mining.
Legislation.
Education.

These eight heads will, we think, cover the whole range of the public service, and we have no hesitation in again challenging the opposition to come forward with specific criticisms that can be assigned to a place under either of these heads, or under some other head,

which ought to be included in the list. We do not promise to wait until such criticisms are made before defending the record of the ministry. It may not be good policy to begin a defence before the attack, but since it seems impossible to force the opposition to adopt open and manly tactics, it may be advisable to lay the whole record of administration open, that the public may see what it is that is assailed by insinuation, what it is that these factious and irresponsible critics insist is worthy of utter condemnation.

Probably there is no other instance in Canadian politics where a ministry has been assailed with the sort of criticism that has been directed against the government of British Columbia. Some of its critics, like the Times, simply give vent to the jaundiced views, that have resulted from repeated disappointments. Some, like the Westminster Columbian, are in opposition simply because the accidents of politics placed them there. Some, like the Nelson Tribune, attack the government because those behind it are ambitious for personal advancement. Some, like the Rosland Miner, are hostile chiefly because of their ignorance of provincial politics. Their sole bond of union is the fact that they are not in power. They agree on no lines of policy. They are scarcely less opposed to each other than to the government. Those of them who have had experience in public life have demonstrated their unfitness for it; those of them who have had no experience have exhibited in countless ways their utter lack of appreciation of the principles and rules of conduct which actuate public men. A considerable portion of them believe in the American doctrine that "public office is a private snap," and as all they want power for is to profit by what they believe are the opportunities for self-aggrandisement it affords, they imagine that those who occupy positions of trust are dishonestly profiting thereby. There never was such an opposition.

A CASE OF PIRACY.

The case of the man whose goods were to all intents and purposes seized in Seattle for no other reason than because they were bought in Victoria, calls for immediate consideration. We do not believe that the action of the customs house pirates at Seattle will be sustained by the United States treasury. Here we have a man going from one part of Canada to another, who applies to be allowed to carry his goods in bond through a little strip of so-called American territory. It is conceded that he is entitled to do so under the agreement between the governments of the two countries; but because those goods in transit must pass over a few hundred feet of the Seattle waterfront they are confiscated. True, there was no formal confiscation; but when a man is told that he can neither take his goods with him nor send them back where they came from, and is compelled to leave them in the hands of the pirates, to whom they were reported for the purpose of complying with the law, it is not very easy to distinguish the performance from a confiscation.

We fancy that the Seattle customs house authorities will find that they have an elephant on their hands in the shape of this man's outfit. Surely no one will contend that under the law of the United States a man may not take goods to one of its sea ports, with the intention of complying with the customs law in regard to them, without being subject to seizure and confiscation. If this is the law of that country, it is time the rest of the civilized world knew it, for commercial relations with it would soon become impossible. The owner of these goods had not the most remote intention of taking them into the United States to be used there. He reported them to the customs house authorities in order that they might be bonded. When they declined to admit them to bond he asked permission to take them back again to Victoria. This was refused, and he was told that only one course lay open to him, namely, to abandon his purchase to the piratical officers and buy what goods he needed in Seattle. It is admitted that he had a perfect right to take his goods North on the Queen in bond. He was, in fact, told that he ought to have left them in Victoria to be put on the Queen here. Yet, strange to say, when he asked to be given back his goods again so as to send them to Victoria to be put on the Queen here, he was told that he could not have them without paying duties on them. Now we submit that in no other part of the world would a man, who in good faith brought goods into a port expecting to be able to put them in bond, be refused permission to take them away again, even if he had no right to bond them; much less would he be so refused when he had a perfectly legal right to bond them.

We are not prepared to believe that the treasury department of the United States will lend itself to this business of boosting the diminishing trade of the Seattle outfitters. The facts must be carefully ascertained and the proper complaint must be lodged at Washington. If this is done we are confident that the Seattle officers will be taught a much needed lesson. In the meantime the incident has an important lesson. Coming upon the heels of the persistent misrepresentations of the Seattle papers,

as to the effect of the Canadian temporary exemption, it shows the straits to which the Seattle people are driven. Yesterday's Colonist, in addition to the story of this Seattle piracy, contained an official communication from Collector Milne correcting the misrepresentations made in Seattle in regard to the exemptions. When these incidents become widely known they will afford the best possible answer to the blatant claim of that city that it is the only place where a miner should think of outfitting. We regret to have to write in this way about a city for which Victoria has always cherished such kindly feelings, but when a business campaign of falsehood is capped by an act of official piracy, it is time for plain speaking.

THE PRICE OF SILVER.

The great fall in the price of silver, coming so closely upon the heels of the Klondyke gold discoveries, suggests that speculators have been getting in the work. Japan has stopped buying and consequently a good customer has dropped out of the market, but this was foreseen and must have been, in a great measure, discounted by the dealers in bullion. The rule in matters of this kind seems to be to keep the real truth in the background, and it may be a long time before we know, if we ever do, why silver slumped. When the financial journals come to hand with their explanation, we will be told just what those, who manipulate the market, choose to tell us. We are somewhat impressed by the fact that this sudden drop in price followed hard upon the visit of the bimetallic deputation from the United States to the European capitals. This also suggests that it was engineered. Very large financial interests are deeply concerned in preventing the remonetization of silver, and they are able to depress the price of the metal whenever they see fit. One of the most effective arguments against bimetalism is the fluctuation in the price of silver. Monometalists compare it with gold, which they say is always uniform in price, forgetting or purposely concealing the fact that the value of gold owes its permanency to legislation. If gold were demonetized, as was suggested after the great California discoveries, its price would fall and thereafter fluctuate.

It is hard for us to realize any other money standard than gold, yet every time we speak of pounds and shillings we bear unconscious testimony to this fact that silver was the original money standard. Originally a pound meant a pound weight of silver, and it was coined into twenty shillings. English monarchs, having the prerogative right to fix the coinage, had some tricks of their own to make a little money go a long way, and they reduced the amount of silver in a shilling until they made 288 of them out of a pound of silver. Queen Elizabeth made 60 shillings out of the pound of silver; King James made 62, and so it continued until the thrifty Hanoverians came to the throne, when George I made 66 shillings out of the pound, and it was decreed that 20 of such shillings should thereafter be a pound in money, and this term ceased thereafter to have any other significance than that it was a sum of money equal to twenty-sixths of a pound weight of silver, and so it stands to this day. An interesting thing may be mentioned in this connection, namely, that the original pound was equivalent in weight to 7,880 full grains of wheat taken from the centre of the ear and well dried.

One remarkable incident connected with the present slump in silver is the rise in wheat. Hitherto a favorite claim of the bimetalists has been that silver and wheat rose and fell pari passu, that when wheat was worth \$1 a bushel silver was worth \$1 an ounce. Statistics seem to corroborate this claim to some extent, although when critically examined they do not. The demonstration of the fallacy of this claim will have the effect of greatly weakening the cause of bimetalism among the farmers of the United States, where it has hitherto been very strong.

We do not feel like hazarding an opinion as to the future price of silver, because the most any one can hope to do is to guess. Many of the mines must close if the present price continues, and this will create a shortage in the supply and consequently an appreciation in the price. The claim is made that the mines of Mexico cannot produce at a profit at the present price; but we do not know how true this is. One thing seems to be established, namely, that the mines of British Columbia will be the last to have to yield to the fall in value of the bullion, and they therefore seem to have a good chance ahead of them, even at the present price.

A CORRESPONDENT residing at Santa Ana, California, gives the provisions of the mining laws of the United States as far as they relate to aliens. These laws have been adopted to prevent what is likely to occur in the Yukon country. It is the American theory that no one should be allowed to possess the full advantages of citizenship without accepting its full responsibilities, or at least without giving an earnest of his intention to do so by making the necessary statutory declaration. In the light of the history of the United States it cannot be said that this policy has not much to recommend it. So well satisfied with it are the American people that not the

slightest attempt has ever been made to change it. We have hitherto pursued a very different course in Canada. Almost every privilege of citizenship is open to aliens. We do not call the voting power, eligibility to office, obligation to military service, and the like, privileges. These are responsibilities. As long as an alien refuses to accept these responsibilities in the United States he is debarred from the privilege of mining in all the States and even from purchasing real estate in many of them. We think it might be well for us to take pattern by our neighbors to some extent in these matters.

We would not venture to dispute the opinion of the British Columbia Mining Office on any subject under the sun. It knows more about every question that ever was or will be propounded than any other man or possible combination of men. At the same time it may be well to say that in endeavoring to allay the alarm felt by the friends of those who have started for the Yukon, by pointing out the actual character of the difficulties and hardships to be encountered in the North, and the reasonable prospect that while there will undoubtedly be some suffering and great inconvenience, if ordinary precautions are taken the great majority ought to be able to put in a tolerable winter, we only did what the facts warrant, and were not seeking to promote the business of the Victoria outfitters or anyone else.

There are some advantages of British connection which most of us do not think of, but they touch us none the less closely on that account. They are something like the atmosphere, which every one enjoys. Alone Canada would hardly be a great power. As a part of the British Empire it is an integral portion of the greatest power the world has ever seen. It would not be easy to express the value of this in dollars and cents, but if we may judge from the tone of a section of the American press, this is all that enables Canada to be independent. There have been a dozen occasions in as many years when conscienceless politicians in the United States would have precipitated hostilities against Canada if it were not for British protection.

HERE we have the proposed new provincial administration, which is to succeed Mr. Turner and his friends: Premier, Minister of Finance and Agriculture—C. A. Semlin.

Attorney-General—Adolphus Williams.

Provincial secretary, etc., etc.—F. C. Cotton.

Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works—Donald Graham.

President of the Council—W. W. Walkem.

This is a combination that will not go down very well with the new oppositionists. It will be particularly popular on Vancouver Island, which will have the distinguished honor of being represented in it by Dr. Walkem without portfolio.

In order that COLONIST readers may understand the sort of tactics the Times resorts to we may mention that it describes a recent reference to Mr. Hewitt Bostock in these columns as finding fault with that gentleman because he has wealth and attributing to him base motives. If that can be spelled out of the article we will retract every word that was in it. The references to Mr. Bostock were kindly, were meant to be so, and were so understood by every one. So far as there was any imputation of base motives, it was against those, who for their own selfish ends, are seeking to get Mr. Bostock into the local political arena.

THE St. John Sun, replying to the COLONIST, says that when it said the greater portion of the Yukon mines are in Alaska the error was made by the printer, who substituted Alaska for Alberta. This is an "excuse as it is an excuse." If the Sun is under the impression that the Yukon touches Alberta only as far as the 56th parallel. Then comes Athabaska, which extends to the 60th parallel and then the vast region through which the Great Mackenzie and the Yukon tributaries flow.

The Dominion government has acted wisely in sending a detachment of Mounted Police from Edmonton to reach the Yukon by way of the Peace river. We have very little doubt that a feasible route can be found, although we do not suppose that it will cut very much of a figure as a rival to those from the Coast cities. The interesting fact likely to be developed in connection with this route is that it will in all probability lead to the opening of a vast region, parts of which are rich in gold and others admirably adapted to agriculture.

"SCARCELY a day passes, says the Nelson Miner, "but the Victoria COLONIST has something to say about a new route to Klondyke." As there is no truth in this we are at a loss to understand why the Miner said it. If the Nelson paper desires to intimate that in its judgment the Klondyke is somewhat overdone, we have only to say that it falls very short of appreciating the situation.

If sick headache is misery, what are Carter's Little Liver Pills if they will positively cure it? People who have used them speak frankly of their worth. They are small and easy to take.

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