WAXED FAT.

We take it that the escapade of one Webster Davis, once an employee of the government at Washington, who resigned his position, made a flying trip to South Africa and was received with great cordiality and a special train by President Kruger, has not been forgotten. Mr. Davis was only in the Transvaal a few days, yet he came away so profoundly impressed with the justice of the Boer cause that when he arrived home again he could not resist the "impulse" of his "better nature," so he took to the platform and delivered lectures and he took up his pen and wrote a book, the speaking and the writing being intended to influence American opinion and possibly create such a wave of sympathy as would compel the government of the American republic to interpose on behalf of her South African sister. Mr. Davis was Assistant Secretary of the Interior in the McKinley administration, and it always was a puzzle why he resigned that lucrative job to embark on a crusade which promised such meagre financial returns. He could not have learned much about the questions at issue between the rivals for power in South Africa in the short time he remained at Pretoria, yet when he came home he wrote and spoke as one inspired. It is rather curious, however, that Davis's enthusiasm waned in company and in harmony with the fortunes of the Boers. As the funds of the Boers ran low the voice of Davis became weak. At the time of the sensational escapade of Davis the Times ventured the opinion that he, like Leyds, was merely a hired agitator, that his task on this continent was to be the same as that of the learned, diplomatic, discreet and acquisitive young doctor in Europe—to arouse the people against Great Britain. It seems to have dawned upon the people of the United States that love of liberty was not the sole moving force in the case of their fellow-republican, Mr. Webster Davis. Therefore it is very interesting to learn that the people of Kansas City, where Mr. Davis took up his abode after he had done with the Boer cause, have been saying hard things about him. So severe have the comments of these Americans been that Mr. Davis has determined to shake the dust of his plains from his feet and retire to New York, where the presence of multitudes will be a guarantee of obscurity. The severity and unkindness to which reference has been made consisted of remarks to the effect that when Mr. Davis left Washington he was a comparatively poor man, but soon after he returned from South Africa he began to build large apartment houses, of which he now owns three. His brother, who ought to know, says that Mr. Davis never received a cent from Mr. Kruger, but had good friends in New York who gave him "tips" on the stock market. According to this high authority he made $41,000 in a single day on one of these "tips," and his book on the Boers brought him in $140,000—which is a good deal of money. The New York Times doubts whether even in that great city Mr. Davis will be left in peace to enjoy his legitimate spoils. It is pleasing to note that the mobs in American cities, taken as a whole, have a sensitive regard for the fitness of things. The experience of Mr. Davis proves that it is hardly considered honorable in a man for a consideration to devote his talents to a cause the effects of which might be a conflict between two of the great nations of the world and the greatest disaster that ever befel the human family. Individually our neighbors may not be too fastidious in matters affecting the national honor, but collectively they draw the line quite distinctly. Mr. Davis when he took up his mission was reported to have gone forth as Assistant Secretary of the Interior. It was afterwards pointed out that he had resigned his post and that his errand was not an official one. Americans probable feel that the honor of their nation is remotely involved and are not slow to signify their displeasure.

LET IT REST.

After a desperate struggle which has lasted four months an armistice will today be accepted by the warring factions over the Bay, and the belligerants will retire to their tents for repose and recuperation. They need it. The country will not mourn. It has become disgusted and weary and cannot follow the proceedings of the Legislature with any degree of interest. The great "business government" retires to its rest with a record for baseness, incapacity, servility to corporations, cynical disregard for the dignity of the positions occupied by its members, and utter abandonment of principle, without parallel in British history. Such institutions as the "Family Compact," which held old Canada in thralldom, possessed the saving grace of pride. The government of British Columbia has been humbled in the dust. It has been pummelled by the opposition and bullyragged by its own supporters, who felt they had it at their mercy and might do with it as seemed best to them, but the thought of salary day obscured all other considerations, and prorogation has been reached with this province a by-word in the mouths of the inhabitants of all countries in which the English language is spoken.

It was thought when the session which is about to close was opened that in two months legislation would be passed which would restore confidence in British Columbia and enable our people to go forward in faith toward the goal of provincial prosperity. The work of the Legislature is done. The government has abandoned every measure of importance bearing upon the question of development, or passed it in such form as to nullify its possible effectiveness. The Legislature proposes to crown its work by conferring the franchise on youths of eighteen years of age. Is it to be wondered at that the general manager of the Bank of Montreal, in his review of the business situation in Canada, should say that while his faith in British Columbia is still high, it may be some time yet before the province recovers from the collapse which the last two or three years has witnessed. Observe the contrast with the situation in other parts of the Dominion, according to the same authority: "Generally speaking, the past year has been a prosperous one for Canada, and so far the hand of the commercial barometer still stands at 'fair.' The revenues of the country are large; railway earnings are steadily increasing; farmers are prosperous; the outlook for lumber is improving and the tide of immigration has set in with greater volume, ensuring to Western Canada, and indeed to the whole country, more rapid progress in population and material prosperity. The natural resources of the country are being steadily developed; the output of coal is increasing, and it looks as if we were on the eve of important results in the iron and steel industry."

Now if the combination which calls itself a government were a government in the proper sense of the term instead of a coteric of feeble-minded hirelings regardless of all but personal considerations—if it looked upon the measures it introduced and claimed to be necessary to the progress of the province as essential to meet the situation—it would have upheld them in the House until they became law, or retired and shifted the responsibility for their rejection upon the opposition. Instead of pursuing the usual course, when this government found itself in a minority it meekly accepted all amendments to its measures proposed by the opposition, and went on its way utterly regardless of jibes and jeers. The fiery Eberts and the "high-spirited" Colonel ate leeks with a gusto that was positively entertaining. They have either acquired a taste for this highly-spiced vegetable or they were born that way. In any case their accomplishments have surprised some of their friends, although if they had been readers of the Times they would have been prepared for the exhibition.

The work of the opposition during a particularly trying session on the whole has been admirable. It has stayed the hands of all the corporations and circumvented the designers of spoilers who thought the opportunities too good to be neglected. The last and the greatest attempt of all, the "moral" claim of the C. P. R., disguised as the Columbia & Western, whose case was so ably championed by the exponent of all the "railway bills" of the government, to over a million of acres of land, to be chosen from the most valuable sections of Yale and Kootenay, was circumvented for another year. Last session this same steal was nearly accomplished by a characteristic piece of trickery. This year an attempt was made to disarm suspicion by declarations that the government had no intention of recognizing the claim. This was the last and supreme effort of the "grafters," who have now all gone to their rest for a few months. The one matter of regret is that the government they keep in power cannot be sent with them into permanent retirement. Then the province would have a chance.

BOOKS ON WAR.

Michael Davitt also has written a book on the Boer war. The good fortune of Mr. Webster Davis in his "work" may have had something to do with the undertaking of Mr. Davitt. It is perhaps unfortunate for the Irish author that all the subsidies were exhausted and the war over before his book appeared. Mr. Davis's was a "guaranteed" edition, Mr. Davitt's will have to pay its own way, and no doubt will prove quite as profitable as the agitation which never ceases in another field. The world has not yet been informed whether Mr. Davitt's book will be published elsewhere than in the United States. We are inclined to believe it will not, because it is admittedly nothing more than the production of a partizan and completely lacking in historical accuracy. But the latter is not a quality that would insure success for such a work in the United States. Richard Harding Davis has also expressed his opinions upon the war, as we all know, his deductions, conclusions and observations having been completely disproved and denied by more reputable men from his own country. This mania for authorship, however, is one of the curious consequences of a war which was begun in ignorance and has ended in a great increase of knowledge. The New York Times thinks a great historically accurate and thoroughly impartial account of the campaign has yet to appear. Perhaps our contemporary is right. However, the London Times has issued or is about to issue a work which may be depended upon to be as accurate and impartial as anything that will appear in any country until time has removed prejudices, healed wounds and smothered resentments.

WHAT MAKES YOU DESPONDENT?—Has the stomach gone wrong? Have the nerve centres grown tired and listless? Are you threatened with nervous prostration? South American Nervine is nature's corrector, makes the stomach right, gives a world of nerve force, keeps the circulation perfect. A regular constitution builder for rundown people. One lady says: "I owe my life to it." Sold by Jackson & Co. and Hall & Co.—84.

TWENTIETH CENTURY INDIAN POTLATCH

THE GATHERING OF BRAVES AT COWICHAN

Paying Off Old Debts—The Distribution of Blankets—Canoe Races and Other Sports.

The potlatch of to-day is a very different affair from the "stlahnuk" of 20 years ago, and Mr. Robertson, the Indian agent at Duncans, took very particular pains to impress this fact upon my mind, for the original potlatch as everyone knows is now no longer permitted by a paternal government. "You should describe the present gathering as just a 'Nee-nee time,' he remarked to me, and he aded: "It is really a most harmless affair, conducted on similar lines to a church conference. The Indians take this opportunity of gathering together to make one another's acquaintance; to afford the young bucks of the different tribes a chance of meeting young klootchmen with (as the advertisements say) 'a view to matrimony,' and lastly in order that these young men may have the advantage of listening to and profiting by the counsels of the elders and sages." Thus Mr. Robertson.

The modern potlatch, such as the meeting at Cowichan, is all this and something more. Not all the old customs have been allowed to die out, by any means; and while the most objectionable features of what formerly constituted a programme have disappeared, the business side of the potlatch is still regarded as of far more importance than its merely social characteristics. The original potlatch was prohibited on account of the revolting cannibal dance, which was one of its principal characteristics. In this dance the performer went through such trifling antics as rending a live dog limb from limb, and afterwards amused himself by running amuck among the spectators, literally seeking whom he might devour, and having captured a victim, biting a comfortable mouthful out of the unfortunate's arm. Only the iniated were permitted to take part in this dance, and the initiation itself was sufficiently disgusting; but that is another tale and can wait. Meanwhile before the government intervened, someone else was first instrumental in putting a stop to the practice, among one tribe at least. That was Mr. Tate, the Indian missionary, who has worked in his chosen field so assiduously for a time extending back 32 years, and has done so much towards teaching the aborigines to consider and value higher things. Twenty years ago Mr. Tate was stationed at Bella Bella. He had already there established an influence over the younger generation of the tribesmen. A potlatch was to take place, at which the cannibal dance was to be danced. Mr. Tate delivered an ultimatum, either, he said, the potlatch would not be held or he would go elsewhere. Young and old beseeched him to remain; but he had stated his position. Then at a council the question was long and earnestly debated. The old men were loath to forget the customs of there forefathers; the young men contended that they cared less for these things than that Mr. Tate should go away. Neither side would yield. Then the young men said: "Very well, hold your potlatch, but we will take no part in it." But without the younger men's participation the potlatch was not possible. Mr. Tate remained for some time thereafter at Bella Bella, but to this day among the Bella Bellas there have been no potlatch. The present condition of the tribe is highly civilized, more so indeed than is the case in respect to the Indians in any of the other British Columbia coast settlements. The Bella Bellas are now building a new village, and this new village boasts such a very modern institution as a co-operative store. But this by-the-way.

There were probably gathered together at Cowichan last week between five and six hundred Indians. These included Laquiltos from Cape Mudge, Tsootts from Comox, Squamish from Vancouver, Musqueams from North Arm, Lumnie from near Whatcom, Swimimish from Laconner, Lukwammive from Victoria, Penelekut from Saanich, Chemainus and Nanaimo Indians, and five tribes of Cowichans. It was a happy, smiling-faced crowd, and not an unpicturesque one, that for the most part squatted on its haunches on the banks of the river on the Quamichan reservation. Compared with an Oriental festival the garb was sombre, not to say dingy, but this was relieved in part by the bright silk handkerchiefs and neat dresses of the women, many of whom, too, were not ill-looking. But what impressed one chiefly was the extraordinary patience of this congregation. There they would all sit for hours at a stretch watching the relatives of a dead man pay the deceased's debts. The relatives were manifestly most conscientious in the performance of this duty, a "lawyer" being retained especially to explain under what circumstances, how, when and where each debt was contracted. He did this at length, and with a great flow of eloquence, but to me the proceedings, after two or three hours' on-looking, seemed somewhat monotonous. Nevertheless I waited with the rest, for I was sustained with the hope of securing later worthy subjects to photograph. That I was not altogether disappointed will appear from the reproductions herewith presented. It is expedient, meanwhile, that I should explain why a man should select a time such as the occasion of a presumably festive gathering to perform so melancholy a duty as that of settling with his creditors. But as a matter of fact, that is first and foremost the object of the potlatch. The word potlatch, in the Chinook jargon, means, as everybody knows, a gift or giving; but the Indian word describing the function is, translated, the feast of blankets. Now, in times gone by, blankets made of the hair of the mountain goat, rubbed into thread with white clay, constituted the "legal tender" of the country, and at these feasts it was the custom to transact all important tribal business, and to regard them as sort of "settling days." Thus, after reception dances had been held, when the chiefs, painted, masked and robed, had welcomed their guests, the giving of a feast, and after the dancing of another dance—the Death Dance—the marriage contracts were arranged, the young women being bargained off for so many blankets. Then came the paying of debts, and when these had all been collected—payment being, of course, made in blankets—the chief of each tribe was called forward, requested to name the numbers of his tribe, and each man according to his dignity received from one to one hundred blankets, on the understanding that these were to be returned at a subsequent potlatch.

Photo by H. M. L.

THE DEATH DANCE.

The figures round which the dancers are revolving is supposed to represent the dead man and is composed of a bundle of blankets, surmounted by the deceased Indian's hat. They are afterwards distributed to creditors.

Photo by H. M. L.

Hoisting the blankets, which are afterwards scrambled for, up to the elevated platform. The dead man's son superintends this operation.

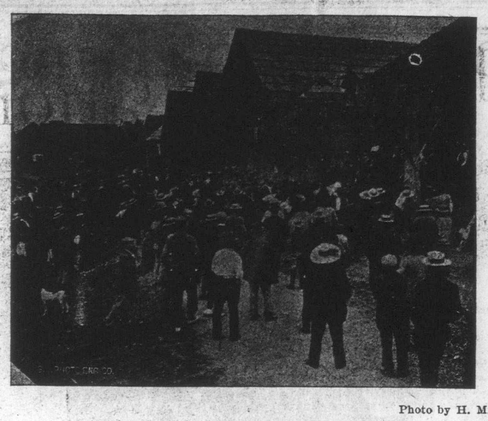

Photo by H. M. L.

Throwing the blankets to the expectant crowd.

The potlatch is really a sort of siwash banking system. When one man accumulates a considerable property he distributes it, being perfectly satisfied that he will receive it again with interest in due course. There is in addition, however, the "cultus potlatch." This is actually a free gift of property. In one of my photographs a distribution of this kind is shown. The son of the deceased gentleman, whose debts have all been paid off, wishes to give a practical demonstration of his delight at the removal of the incubus (I can imagine that it would be a most delightful sensation), and so he hauls up a number of blankets to the top of an elevated platform, and then hurls them down to be scrambled for by the expectant multitude below. There is a tremendous stretching upwards of hands as the blanket descends, for the object is to get hold of as large a piece of blanket as possible, and this cut off with a knife is afterwards unravelled and rewoven by the fortunate possessor's thrifty klootchman.

Photo by H. M. L.

The first event in the sports, the poling race, in which the Nanaimo won first place.

These proceedings consumed the better part of a week and a half at the Cowichan convention, and what followed on Saturday last, the canoe racing, the baseball match and the athletic sports, were instances of the innovations of modern times. In less than another generation, if one may judge by the signs, the remnant of the old customs will have passed away, and the innovations will have entirely taken their place. The sports, however, were well worth seeing, if only on account of the extraordinary vim and energy displayed by the participators.

In every case the best man won. In the canoe races, Nanaimo won the poling contest, Saanich the four paddle race for boys under fifteen, and Cape Moise Island the two paddle race. A very sporting game of baseball was played in the afternoon, and this again was followed by sprinting races, the laurels being carried off in these latter by Willie Good, the son of the Nanaimo chief, Gus. Underwood, and some others rejoicing in Biblical names. Bill Whulates-ailox, the giver of the potlatch, moreover received great kudos by offering a hundred blankets as prizes to the competitors at the sports.

In conclusion, it is worthy of remark that although the festivities extended over a period of nearly two weeks, there was only one case of misbehavior reported. In this instance an Indian was found with whiskey in his possession, and was, without loss of time, collared and fined by the Indian agent. The whole proceedings went off, in fact, with the decorum of a temperance convention, and there really appears to be little cause for condemning the potlatch or endeavoring to prohibit its occurrence, except only on one score. However useful a purpose the function may have served in the past, and even this is dubious, those objects no longer exist, and without doubt the modern potlatch is responsible for a most unholy waste of valuable time and money. Here, at this season of the year, the siwash should be getting in his hay and attending to the important summer work of his farm. He leaves, in some instances, his property for quite six or seven weeks—for a journey from, say, the north end of the Island in a canoe is a lengthy business—without anyone to look after it, and he returns to find his hay crop too ripe, his fences broken down, the pigs playing havoc with the potatoes, and all for what? To get a few blankets, which he is not supposed to make any use of, but is obliged to return on some future occasion in as good order as when received from the donor. Surely a senseless enough proceeding in all conscience. At the same time it must not be forgotten that the Indian is—well, still an Indian, and it is rather hard luck to say that he shall not enjoy himself in his own way occasionally, that mode of enjoyment being after all, in every really important respect, harmless enough.

H. MORTIMER-LAMB.

Photo by H. M. L.

An exciting finish. The double paddle event.

THE DANGEROUS LAMP.

Considerable Damage Done by Fire to a Private Residence Yesterday.

A fire occurred yesterday afternoon at the residence of Robert Winters, corner of Vancouver and Maclure streets, which resulted in damage to the extent of about $200.

The fire was caused by a child upsetting a lamp and considerable damage was done to the kitchen and pantry before the arrival of the fire brigade from the Central and Yates street stations.

The cottage was a new one, and Winters, who is coachman for Mr. Justice Irving, had only just taken possession.

The damage is covered by insurance.

HEART DISEASE RELIEVED IN 30 MINUTES.—Dr. Agnew's Cure for the Heart gives perfect relief in all cases of Organic or Sympathetic Heart Disease in 30 minutes, and speedily effects a cure. It is a peerless remedy for Palpitation, Shortness of Breath, Smothering Spells, Pain in Left Side, and all symptoms of a Diseased Heart. One dose convinces. Sold by Jackson & Co. and Hall & Co.—83.

THE SHERIFF TO BE SUPERANNUATED

IS SO PROVIDED FOR IN SUPPLEMENTARIES

Additional Aid to the Different Opposition Constituencies by the Final Supply Vote.

The supplementary estimates as passed by the House last night were as follows:

Legislation.—Contingent fund (additional to $1,500 voted), $1,500.

Administration of Justice (other than salaries).—Miscellaneous (additional to $5,000 voted), $500.

Public Works.—Works and buildings: Court house, Victoria (additional to $1,300 voted), $400; roads, streets, bridges and wharves: Westminster district, Richmond Riding (additional to $19,500 voted), $2,360; Westminster district, Dewdney Riding (additional to $17,000 voted), $1,350; Westminster district, Chilliwack Riding (additional to $13,000 voted), $1,100; Westminster district, Delta Riding (additional to $11,650 voted), $2,300; Yale district, West Riding (additional to $21,550 voted), $1,400. Total, $8,510.

Miscellaneous.—Advertising (additional to $6,000 voted), $1,500; stationery (additional to $13,000 voted), $750; telephone service (additional to $2,200 voted), $500; subsidy to Upper Columbia Navigation & Tramway Co. (Amendment Act, 1901), $2,500; in aid of sufferers from coal mine explosion at Fernie, $10,000; grant to city of Sandon, on condition of providing for government office required (additional to $4,567.90 granted in 1901), $432.10. Total, 15,682.10. Total for year, $26,592.10.

Public Debt.—Interest: "Loan Act, 1902" (to be floated), 12 months' interest, anticipated, at 3 per cent. on additional $500,000 (interest on $3,000,000 already provided for in main estimates), payable on 31st December, 1902, and 30th June, 1903, $15,000.

Sinking Fund.—"Loan Act, 1902" (to be floated), 1 per cent., estimated, on additional $500,000 (sinking fund on $3,000,000 already provided for in main estimates), payable on 31st December, 1902, and 30th June, 1903, $5,000.

Civil Government (Salaries).—Provincial secretary's department: Capital buildings' attendants, two janitors, each (additional to salary) 12 months to 30th June, 1903, at $10, $240. Department of finance and agriculture: Audit office, clerk (additional to salary) 12 months to 30th June, 1903, at $15, $180. Lands and works department: Lands branch, secretary (additional to salary) 12 months to 30th June, 1903, at $10, $120; works branch, clerk (additional to salary) 12 months to 30th June, 1903, at $10, $120. Assessor's office, Victoria: Assistant assessor (additional to salary), 12 months, to 30th June, 1903, at $10, $120. Administrative staff, West Kootenay agencies: Revelstoke agency, mining recorder, 12 months to 30th June, 1903, at $85, $1,020.

Administration of Justice (Salaries).—Supreme Court and County Courts: Deputy registrar, Rossland, 12 months, to 30th June, 1903, at $95, $1,140.

Public Works.—Works and buildings: Court house, Greenwood (construction and furniture), $10,000; preparing plans and specifications for proposed court house, Nelson, $750; lock-up, Fernie (extension), $1,200; lock-up, Ladysmith (construction), $1,000; public schools throughout the province (additional to $57,750 voted), $9,500; dykes (maintenance), $20,000. Roads, streets, bridges and wharves: Alberni district (additional to $5,000 voted), including China Creek road, $1,000, $3,800; Comox district (additional to $11,300 voted), road from Hardy Bay to Coal Harbor, $1,000; Westminster district, Richmond Riding (additional to $8,000 voted), $4,000; Dewdney trunk road and Pitt river ferry (construction), $3,500; Yale district, West Riding (additional to $10,500 voted), $1,500; West Kootenay district, Slocan Riding, South Fork and Kaslo Creek road, $2,500; New Denver bridge (construction), $3,000; Barnet-Hastings road (completion), $2,500; contribution towards building bridge at Extension, South Nanaimo district, $2,000; grant to settlers for construction of bridge at Rosendale, Chilliwack, $400; grant to Consolidated Hydraulic Mining Co. for work done on road between Quesnel Forks and Horsefly, $1,116.50; bridges generally (additional to $6,500 voted), $6,000; wharves generally (additional to $3,500 voted), $1,000. Contingencies: Contingencies (additional to $50,000 voted), $5,000.

Miscellaneous.—Library, legislative (additional to $1,500 voted), $600; library, travelling (additional to $500 voted), $370; lithographing maps (additional to $1,000 voted), $1,000; grant towards purchase of land for drill hall site, Vancouver, $1,000; poultry shows (additional to $300 voted), $300; specimens of fish, etc., for agent-general's office, London, $1,000; expenses in connection with Coronation, $1,900; commission on coal mines, $3,000; superannuation of J. E. McMillan, 12 months, to 30th June, at $50, $600; immigration (additional to $4,000 voted), $2,000. Total for year $114,476.50.

SONS OF SCOTLAND.

New Organization Formed With a Membership of Sixty—Officers Elected.

A new society has been organized in the city which will be known as the Sons of Scotland. A meeting for organizing was held last Wednesday night, and this was followed by another meeting last night, which was for the purpose of electing officers. John Black was appointed chief; Mr. Mowat, chieftain; John Wilson, standard bearer, and D. H. McDonald, recording secretary.

A. Gordon, of Toronto, has been in the city for several days completing arrangements for the organization, and has met splendid success as may be inferred from the fact that the society has a membership already of sixty. All those who are Scotch or who are of Scotch descent are eligible for membership. It was decided that the regular meeting place shall be the Sir William Wallace hall.