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D. M. CARLEY - - - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.
L. G. HENDERSON - - BUSINESS MANAGER.

Office—No. 77 Johnson Street.

VICTORIA, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1891.

MINING MACHINERY.

We are pleased to notice that attention is still being directed in the press of the Eastern Provinces, to the fact of capital being kept out of the British Columbia mining camps, owing to the heavy duty on machinery from the United States. Among those who are warmly interesting themselves in this direction is Captain R. C. Adams, of Montreal, whose cogent writings are well-known and appreciated by the mining papers of the United States. Recently a correspondent of the *Victoria Times* has remarked that under the Wilson Bill, copper ores, metal etc., are placed on the free list, and since all the large copper properties of the Kootenay country lie near the boundary line, the down grade lying into the United States, where the ore could be treated at moderate cost, the tendency would be to have the Canadian product shipped there for reduction. Many of the Kootenay mines being owned in the United States there would be little left in Canada except the money actually expended on the mines themselves. It has been observed in this connection that reduction machinery costs many times more than the mines and the expenses of their development which fully bears out the remark of a correspondent of the *Times* that: "If an American can handle this ore as cheaply in the United States and save the high duties on machinery and all other supplies and at the same time avoid the numerous petty fees and dues exacted on this side of the line, he will most assuredly put his machinery where it is under the protection of his own government, and puts the most money in his pocket." It is held that although the law provides that mining machinery not made in Canada can be imported free of duty, Canadian machinery has not so far secured the confidence of the miners who are not indeed assured that they can obtain the appliances they require on this side the line. In order then to prevent the ore being sent away for treatment, it would be in the interest of mineral development to have the duties removed from machinery brought in from the United States. The very fact of the existence of this duty prevents, it is contended, the investment of large sums in the mines of this Province which, every thing considered, has reason to expect that in the tariff revision that is now being prepared this particular matter will receive special attention. It is upon its mines that British Columbia must largely

depend, and this being the case the question is not of one individuals but of the entire community.

THE MID-WINTER FAIR.

The San Francisco Mid-Winter Fair is, according to latest advices, to have its duration extended until the end of July, and it may yet be determined to carry it on well into August, that is if the prospects of its further success are at all promising. The ostensible reason for the prologation already resolved upon is that the fair was not opened until nearly a month after the time originally determined on, while the change will, it is said, enable a better display to be made of the deciduous fruits of California. It has under the new order of things been determined to make the fourth of July—Independence Day the great day of the Fair, and as was the case at Chicago there will be a variety of special days. We notice, however, that M. H. De Young, proprietor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and Director-General of the Fair, is now having a controversy with the newspaper men of that city he having, they say, impugned their reliability and characterized them as devoid of integrity.

The Press Club, not unnaturally, has decided that the big man of the fair has been guilty of gross unprofessional conduct, and has cited him to appear and show cause why he should not be expelled from the organization. The members of the club, moreover, have signified their intention of refusing to participate in the celebration of Press Day at the Fair. We have no idea of the merits of the case; but it is noteworthy that not unfrequently newspaper men when at the head of any enterprise are accustomed to treat journalists of all descriptions with far less consideration than do other people, but in the present instance inasmuch as the *Chronicle* is by no means the only organ of public opinion in San Francisco, Mr. De Young, Director-General, etc., will, if at all in the wrong, be made the object of no small amount of adverse criticism and censure. For our part we hope that the reporters and editors, if they are in the right, will assume their legitimate position and vindicate it no matter who suffers.

WAGES AND SALARIES.

There is now before the Provincial Legislature a Bill introduced by Mr. Horne, which provides that wages for three months shall be a preferred claim in case of assignment. We are glad to see that this measure has taken its second reading, the principle involved being thereby affirmed by the House. The Premier, too, endorsed the proposal, saying it was a necessary complement to the Act now in force respecting seizures by the sheriff. Under the law as at present employees have no protection whatever except as ordinary creditors when an assignment for the benefit of creditors takes place.

We have known numerous cases in which the law as now existing has been productive of very great hardships, inasmuch as not unfrequently out of consideration for an employer who had expectations of making both ends meet or of

satisfactorily arranging his affairs, employers have allowed their wages to run only to discover that they have been badly left. There can be no question that the abstention from bringing matters to a climax has very frequently been to the advantage of the body of creditors, though in some cases it has doubtless been abused to their prejudice. However, as a rule the item of overdue wages is not as a rule a very large item on the liability side of the sheet.

HARD TIMES.

The *Winnipeg Commercial* contains the following: "The most of the talk one hears about hard times in Winnipeg this winter is really sound and nothing more. Some one—perhaps one who is a little slow in his payments talks gloomily about hard times, and his story is repeated by others who become sympathetically affected thereby. Many men who are in a position to speak with authority, state that they cannot see any material difference between this and average seasons."

The following is from the *Toronto Mail*: "Rightly enough, an emphatic denial has been given to the statement that there is great destitution in the Canadian Northwest but had the remark been made of British Columbia, it could not be so readily contradicted. In the cities of Vancouver and Victoria there is so much want that the president of the British Columbia Benevolent Society declares the Provincial Government should assist by granting relief. This, however, is not necessarily a reflection upon Canada, for President Burns adds that very many of the destitute have come from the United States."

It would be foolish to attempt to deny that a certain amount of distress actually prevails in the two leading cities of the Province—not so much, however, as the *Mail* believes—but, as the *Mail* says, very many of the destitute come from the United States, while such of our own people as have been mainly afflicted have been injured by the influx of strangers whom hard times had driven from across the line or who had come in from the country because they were not content to remain on the farms and earn their livelihoods as their fathers did before them. Winnipeg and other Eastern centres have had their days of depression and consequent distress among the poorer classes; but, as is the case with the prairie capital, that time is now over, while in Quebec and Ontario, which have also suffered, matters are reported to be in a better condition than for long past. So will it be here before long. There is nothing to keep us back, and already we are glad to hear many of our people expressing themselves most hopeful, and indeed, confident as to the future.

At the last London fur sale, 1,500,000 muskrat skins, 220,000 raccoon skins, 200,000 skunk skins and 14,000 beaver skins were sold, the result being a decline of 17½ per cent. on skunk, 12½ on beaver and 10 on raccoon skins.