The Colonist.

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SIR ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

In the House of Commons, Sir Wilfrid Laurier was asked why he had disallowed certain British Columbia legislation. He replied, in effect, that it was on account of Imperial reasons. He was then asked if the Imperial government made a difference between a Canadian province and an Australian or South African colony. Nimble Sir Wilfrid then said it was for Canadian reasons, the development of trade with Japan, and Japan's geographical position. He was then asked whether we did not also expect trade with China, and whether it was a good reason why a Dominion executive should override a parliament, that the trade of Canada was concerned, provided the provincial parliament was within its powers in passing the legislation in question. At this point the Prime Minister withdrew from the discussion in a slightly disfigured condition, and Mr. Fitzpatrick took his place, and cited the opinion of Sir Alexander Campbell in 1884, from which he deduced the finding that the legislation in question was ultra vires of the procincial legislature. He was promptly asked whether the province had been given an opportunity to test this finding in a court of competent jurisdiction. He was obliged to answer, "No!" Mr. Borden then summed up the whole matter as follows: "Assuming now that they (the Acts in question) were disallowed on the ground that they were ultra vires, I want to know whether or not the province of British Columbia had an opportunity of having that question tested by the courts, and if not, why it did not have that opportunity? I am told that it depends upon an opinion given by Sir Alexander Campbell in 1884. Well, Sir Alexander Campbell was not sitting as a court; Sir Alexander Campbell was minister of justice; and the province of British Columbia, if it is bound, as my hon. friend, the Minister of Justice, seems to think it is bound, by the decision of Sir Alexander Campbell in 1884, has had no opportunity of having the question settled by the courts. Therefore, I think that that advances the matter not very much further; it still leaves it as it was before. If it be a fact, what is the reason that the province of British Columbia had not an opportunity of having this question determined by a proper court?" This knocked out Mr. Fitzpatrick completely, and Sir Wilfrid entered the ring again: "I thought I had made myself clear," he said, "but I will try once more to give the reason to my hon. friend. We considered, first of all, that it was very doubtful whether or not it was within the power of the British Columbia legislature to enact such legislation. But, apart from that consideration, we had no doubt whatever that it was not in the interest of Canada, either from an Imperial or Canadian standpoint. We did not give the opportunity to the province to have the matter brought before the courts, because our conviction was too strong in that respect," and so on. Mr. Borden then said: "I think we have practically got back to the first ground again." Sir Wilfrid Laurier replied: "That is the only ground." Now, if human language means anything, that means that the late lamented Sir Alexander Campbell's opinion had as much to do with disallowance as any opinion held by the late lamented Queen Anne. The government might throw doubt upon the province's jurisdiction by quoting his opinion, but it will not allow that opinion to be tested by the courts, because it is determined to override the legislation of the province for other reasons in any case. First, the Times trotted out the Imperial government as an excuse, then it resurrected this opinion of Sir Alexander Campbell. We have taken a special and peculiar delight in exposing the illogical nature and insincerity of this special pleading. Furthermore, we have a few interesting facts and documents we have not yet produced and quoted from. There will be no red herrings drawn across this issue during the forthcoming campaign.

A DEAL INDEED.

The article which appeared in the Colonist yesterday morning was written before it was known here that the policy of constructing 2,000 miles of railway for the Grand Trunk had been endorsed by the government of Canada. We knew it to be a pet scheme of Mr. Blair, and we knew it to be supported by those in the Liberal party who imagine it to be good policy to hoodwink and humburg sincere believers in a principle like that of the government ownership of railways. But we never dreamed that the government would adopt as its own so utterly disingenuous a policy. The Grand Trunk Pacific has asked from the government of Canada larger assistance towards its transcontinental railway than the people are inclined to give, and more than the government dare grant with an appeal to the people in sight. The ostensible reason why such assistance was requested, was the expense and difficulty attached to the building of a road between Quebec and Manitoba, and the unlikelihood, from a business point of view that this portion of the road would in itself be a paying concern. In other words, the interest and maintenance of this part of the road must come out of the traffic developed on either side of it. Now we hope sincerely that resources will be discovered in this portion of Canada which will falsify the present anticipations of business men. But the fact remains that the case we have just stated was the case put forward by the promoters of the Grand Trunk Pacific in asking for the large amount of assistance they did ask for. Now how does the government of Canada meet the question? It meets it by throwing on the Canadian taxpayer the cost of that portion of the road in which the expenses will be heavy and the profits little or nothing, and by assisting the company to a lesser extent to exploit that portion of the country where the expenses will be light and the profits large. And this is a concession to the principle of the government ownership of railways! Judged by that principle, it is the wildest proposition ever laid before intelligent men. If the principle of the government ownership of railways is a good one to apply to a large unproductive segment of a railway system, should it not also be a good one to apply to the certainly and immediately productive portion of the same system, provided that it is applied in the interests of the country? But it is here tolerably obvious that the principle of government ownership is applied not in the interests of the country at all, but in the interests of the Grand Trunk Pacific. The taxpayer builds the least valuable portion of a system and hands it over to a company, which exploits the most valuable portion and utilizes the least valuable to do so. We have sincere doubts about the economic advantages of the taxpayer building any railroads at all in Canada just now. We refuse to bow down before any shibboleth like the phrase "the government ownership of public utilities" until someone has at least made an intelligible distinction applicable in every case between a "public utility" and a "private utility," and insist upon the right to treat of every case of the extension of either municipal or government ownership of anything upon its individual merits. Each individual case is complicated by a number of considerations not to be covered by any phrase, such as the kind of service, the complexity of details in management, the existence or the advantage of competition, and a number of other things widely different in particular cases. We are quite willing to admit that there are a number of services best administered in the hands of the municipality or state; that a number lie on debatable ground; while a number are clearly best performed by private parties. We are willing to go even further and say that some services now on debatable ground may, and probably will, as society becomes better organized, enter the first classification. Economic questions are governed by economic considerations, not by catchwords and political phrases. The government ownership of railways will be a good thing for Canada, whenever it is clear that it means a cheaper and more efficient service of railway facilities, not till then. There is absolutely no virtue in the principle as such if it does not produce tangible benefits. It may be argued that it would not produce any tangible benefits in Canada just now, and an immense amount of reasonable assertion can be adduced in favor of that position. That being so, no cant phrase of politics is going to dislodge any sensible man from the contention that the government ownership of railways in Canada is still a highly debatable question, whose disadvantages are tolerably apparent in experience, and whose advantages have not yet been demonstrated by argument. But our doubts as to the economic advantages of the government ownership of railways in Canada, as a general proposition, are absolute certainties, when the particular application proposed by the government is considered. In that case it must be a failure, and a burden upon the revenue without compensating advantage. The advantage will all be derived by the shareholders or, we should say, the promoters of the Grand Trunk Pacific. We observe in an Eastern despatch that the president of the Grand Trunk had returned to England in a complacent frame of mind. We are not surprised at his complacency. Every obstacle to the ambition of his company is to be shouldered by the government, while every opportunity of profitable railway enterprise is to be left open to the company. This is being done directly at the cost and charges of the Canadian taxpayer. It is the injustice to the British Columbia taxpayer which is particularly galling to us. He, as a Canadian taxpayer, is burdened with the cost of building a railroad between Quebec and Manitoba. But we notice that only the same measure of assistance is meted out to him in having the Western section of the road constructed between the mountains and the Pacific Coast as to the farmer of the Northwest, if allowance be made for mountain construction as compared with prairie construction. He will, through his taxes, pay for the road from Quebec to Manitoba, but high local rates squeezed out of him and his enterprize will pay for the road between the Pacific Coast and Edmonton. This is a form of government ownership little to the taste of any British Columbian. But it is on a par with the attitude of the present Ottawa government on many other matters.

UNION IS STRENGTH.

There are most encouraging advices regarding Conservative unity throughout the province. It is quite evident that the various Conservative conventions held in the province during the last five years have not been without their fruit. At every one of these conventions it has been recognized that sooner or later provincial politics would be divided upon party lines. Although the sentiment of these conventions has always been in favor of this division, there was always a difficulty in giving practical effect to that sentiment, through the separate affiliations and divisions both of leading members of the party and of delegates to the conventions. It has often seemed to the loyal Conservatives who attended these conventions as if they were sawing the air when it came to dealing with provincial affairs. But they were not sawing the air. The repeated asseverations in these conventions that when the call came in provincial politics, all and sundry, would respond to it as one man, were not empty talk; while the mutual acquaintance made by leading spirits in different parts of the province laid a solid foundation of mutual understanding and cohesion, now showing its results. Out of the conflicting political elements in this province has emerged the Liberal-Conservative party, able and ready to do battle in every constituency from end to end of it, and holding out to the people an opportunity to secure stable government which it would be folly to neglect. That the party is in the field in complete armor, not despising its opponents, but eager for the fray and with good hopes of victory, is very largely due to the annual conventions through which the party has been drawn together to that thorough understanding of its aims and objects, strength and weaknesses, which is the best possible guarantee of victory. This great result has been achieved with remarkably little friction. One gentleman in Kaslo has left the Liberal-Conservative party. There is, we understand, a little local friction in Nelson, which will disappear as soon as the party candidate has been nominated. In Victoria, the enemy circulated a rumor that a band of Conservatives was out to lynch or otherwise mishandle Mr. McPhillips, with the object of stirring up strife in the party ranks. This clumsy falsehood may possibly have caused misgivings to a few people, who have been taken in by it. Apart from these three things, we know of nothing disturbing the Conservative party. The Liberal-Conservatives of British Columbia are going into the fight absolutely determined to win, able to appeal to the electors upon a strong and progressive policy, and confident in their ability to put a strong and progressive government securely in the saddle for a number of years. The party means business, and the small politics of its opponents does not disturb it.

A LOYAL CONSERVATIVE.

It is not often that we deal with the individuality of any member of the Liberal-Conservative party. But the Conservatives of Victoria are having thrust at them that the party is split in Victoria, through the factious opposition of one or two of its members here. Neither statement is true, but both statements are likely to damage the party's interests where their falsity is not known. Mr. John Houston of Nelson has been a force in politics municipal, provincial, and federal, in the Kootenay country for quite a number of years. During these years his loyalty to what he considered the interests of the city he lived in, the Province or the Dominion of Canada, has never been questioned, nor has his great ability nor his zeal. He has perhaps been too little ready to give credit to those who differed from him for disinterestedness equal to his own, and he has been a heavy and an unmerciful castigator of his foes on various issues. He has therefore many enemies and these are not confined to any particular party. But he has also many friends, more friends than enemies. A party line fight in provincial politics meant more to Mr. Houston than possibly to any other politician in the province. For two reasons. In the first place, many of his friends and supporters in the past have been Liberals, and a small group of Conservatives have been very bitter opponents of his in municipal politics. They have evidently not ceased their opposition at the call of party, while he, at the call of his party, has divested himself of some of his strength in dealing with them. To our mind, such men disgrace the name of Conservative, because they are trying to utilize the party to wreak a private animosity. Upon what question of provincial politics do they oppose Mr. Houston? Do they subscribe to the Revelstoke platform? He helped to frame it. Do they protest against the Redistribution Act? He was the main instrument in passing such of its provisions as apply to Kootenay. Do they disapprove of the constitution of the Conservative Union of the province? He is its president. We of the Coast cannot be expected to know the ins and outs of the local situation at Nelson. But we do know enough to know that loyalty to the Conservative party, the situation of the province and of the government, call imperatively for a very different attitude towards Mr. John Houston, the president of the Conservative Union, than that adopted by a certain clique in Nelson. In the second place, Mr. Houston finds a demand made upon his party loyalty, by the fact that his allegiance and co-operation is required for men to whom he has been opposed upon issues not now drawn. If John Houston chose to bolt the party, we venture to say he would emerge individually triumphant in Nelson, while some other people in Kootenay would not. He does not so choose. Why? Because he is a loyal Conservative. In his paper last week he quoted a very ignorant statement as to the attitude of the provincial Conservative party on various questions affecting labor. He confuted that statement by the records of Charles Wilson, R. F. Green, Capt. Tatlow and Richard McBride, and said not a word about his own. Every one of these were gentlemen belonging to a section of the party to which Mr. Houston, prior to the introduction of party lines, was opposed. Not one of them has done as much for the working men of British Columbia as Mr. Houston himself. How easy it would have been for him to have let the weight of the accusation he quoted rest on them, and to have absolved himself! But no! He gives them credit where credit is due, and winds up by saying: "Legislation that really benefited labor has not been secured by the 'professional' friend of laboring men; but, instead, it has invariably been secured by men who are broad-minded enough to legislate for all classes. The 'professional' labor legislator is not better than the 'professional' corporation legislator, and sometimes is even worse." That is what we call party loyalty. His reference to men with whom, if he were factious, he would be at daggers drawn, is that in a very important respect, they are "broad-minded enough to legislate for all classes." If the party in Nelson desires Mr. Houston to be its standard-bearer and duly nominates him, we hope that those Conservatives now endeavoring to prevent his nomination, will loyally assist in electing the party candidate, and we are pretty sure they will. A split confined to Nelson would not do any injury there, but its effect throughout the province would be bad. We need united effort everywhere to insure victory all along the line.

A MISSION TO OTTAWA.

The Hon. R. F. Green and the Hon. Charles Wilson have left for Ottawa to press the position and claims of the province in reference to its rights to pass certain legislation and other matters in dispute between British Columbia and the Dominion government. In one of the matters with which they have been charged their mission has been forestalled. We see that the Dominion government has decided to give a substantial bonus to the production of lead. Three-quarters of a cent a pound is very substantial aid, and should have a good effect upon a languishing industry. We would rather have seen a duty placed upon lead and its products entering Canada. At the present time everything British Columbia gets out of lead mines is the wages paid the lead miners. A policy which would have made our lead mines the foundation of a great lead industry by means of which our lead surplus would have been exported in its higher forms of manufacture, would do more to build up Canada than any bonus upon the production of crude lead could possibly do. Still if the government has any conscientious scruples about building up Canadian industries, it could not do less than attempt to restore a mining industry, which, by reason of the aggressive hostility of American producers, had declined. Upon the question of Oriental Immigration, the present government evidently intends to maintain the policy of the province intact. It remains to be seen what the Dominion government proposes to do. How long does it propose to keep up the disallowance of provincial legislation on this subject? What is the attitude towards disallowance adopted by our Liberal representatives at Ottawa? The Dominion government must answer these questions in some way or another. On the question of the control of the Fisheries also, things are in a very unsatisfactory state. The control exercised by the Dominion government appears to be sufficient for the collection of revenue, but insufficient to justify due expenditure for the maintenance and conservation of our fish resources. There is also the question of better terms financially. But upon this question we are afraid, from the statements of the Hon. Mr. Scott, that the attitude of the Dominion government is one from which the province can hope little or nothing. Undoubtedly there is a federal election coming on soon, and the fact that the cry of the lead industry has to some extent been heard, does not diminish our reasons for thinking so. The present therefore is a time when the legitimate grievances of this province may have a chance of some redress, and when the action of the provincial government may receive support from British Columbia members who have their seats to think of. As to that measure known as Bill No. 16, the idea that the Dominion government could interfere in any way with such an Act is, to our mind, absurd. The province is paramount over its land, and the British parliament has as much jurisdiction over Acts concerning it as the Dominion government has. The powers enjoyed by the province are enjoyed by virtue of a constitution as binding upon the Dominion as upon the Province. It is sometimes doubtful where power to deal with certain matters resides, whether in one authority or the other. But where, under the constitution, there can be no doubt as to where the power resides, that power is sovereign, and there is nothing in the world except the force of arms which can overbear it. No Dominion government, however absorptive of doubtful powers it had shown itself to be, would dare, for one moment, to interfere with such a matter as the sovereign authority of this province over its own land. The question is not even arguable. But it may be satisfactory to have assurances that the Dominion government has every intention of living within the law which governs itself as well as us. We trust the mission now undertaken to Ottawa will bear fruit. It should in any case result in a clearer understanding of the relative positions of the Dominion and the Province in a number of important matters.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

If a man wishes to hire a skilled mechanic anywhere in the West, either in the United States or Canada, he finds it very hard to get one, no skilled mechanic is ever long out of work, and it is notoriously seldom that his job ever leaves him, so long as he is willing to remain at work. On the other hand, if a man wishes to hire a young man of good address, which means, as a rule, a young man wearing good clothes and possessing some conventional courtesy, and well educated, at, say, $60 a month, or about one-half of a mechanic's wage, he has more applications for the job than he knows what to do with. There is something entirely wrong about such a condition of affairs as that. We spend enormous sums annually to educate the rising generation. With what result? Year after year, our schools turn out thousands of human beings whose education has tended to fit them for lines of effort already overcrowded, and to unfit them for lines of effort in which there is a continual and ever-increasing demand for skill. "There is no more forlorn," says a newspaper in dealing with this question, "no more dazed and lost creature on earth, than the young man who has gone through the schools, and now comes out into the world to hunt a job." That is sadly but undoubtedly true. A young man who has continued his general education till he is seventeen or eighteen or nineteen years of age, has a vague idea that he is fitting himself for something, but if you were to ask him what, he would not be able to tell you. The fact of the matter is, that unless he invests more capital in special training and enters one of the learned professions, or has some special aptitude or talent making him to some extent independent of his environment, he has the most dreary of all human occupations to relieve it, and least inspiring. Our civilization has never been able to rectify its accepted idea of what constitutes education. Education has been put forward, and almost universally accepted, as the panacea for all human woes. So it is. But it never seems to have occurred to anyone that education could mean anything else than the clerkly accomplishments with which learning was identified in the Middle Ages. When we find that the clerkly accomplishments the State is bestowing upon the rising generation, are not bringing about the desired results, the remedy is—more clerkly accomplishments. If you find that teaching a boy Latin does not fit him for a wholesome, happy, honest and industrious life, the obvious remedy is to teach him Greek as well. You have doubled the dose of the panacea, have you not? We all know the story of the Irishman who was advised to buy one of So-and-So's stoves and save half his fuel, and replied: "Be jabers, I'll buy two of them and save the whole of it!" That is precisely the manner in which our educational system which, with all due deference, is exactly the same in its essential features in Great Britain, Canada and the United States, meets its obvious failure in training the young to meet the actually existent conditions of life. We are on a wrong tack altogether. There comes a time in a young man's life when, if he is to be a success, the general in his training must give way to the specific. By a success we mean a man who does things, good useful things, whether he makes much money or gains much honor or not. The whole tendency of our education is to postpone the determination of the general into the specific training, and it has its crowning fruit when it produces a human being incapable of finding his proper work in the world and of doing it. That is one side of the shield. Now look at the other. Persons competent to judge, say that mechanical skill is disappearing. True it is that the division of industry and the labor of machines are replacing skilled by unskilled labor in many industries. But out of these very conditions arises an equal, in fact, a greater, need of skill in very many branches of human employment. And people say, who ought to know, that mechanical skill is becoming scarce. Certain it is that mechanical skill never commanded as high remuneration as it does today. The apprentice system is dying out. The actual teaching of trades, the handing down from generation to generation of all the pride and love of a craft, is disappearing under modern conditions of industry. Surely that was education, one of the best kinds of education, possibly not more valuable, but certainly as valuable as this monkish legacy of grammar and script writing which, with all its accretions and modern developments, has monopolized the name. It produced mighty men, great doers of real things, you can see their busts in the halls of our colleges, where our young men are taught to know about them, but not to emulate their achievements. Thus then, we have two things which vigorous but too little heeded critics see insistent in our national life, a decay of craftsmanship on the one hand, and on the other, the devotion of an increasing proportion of the people to ill-paid, unintellectual and comparatively valueless labor as clerks and suchlike. The remedy is obvious. It is to make the schools do what the workshops are no longer doing, train the eye and hand, as well as the memory, above all, avoid uniformity of educational means, and cultivate the specific aptitude in the pupil whether clerical, mechanical or artistic, as soon as that aptitude has been made unmistakably manifest.

GERMAN FEARS.

The militarist and Pan-German press maintains with some warmth the idea that British policy is directed in all its moods and tenses, both diplomatic and fiscal, towards the "isolation of the German Empire." Russia has been placated, the United States has been treated with great friendliness, Spain, Italy and France with an overflow of courtesy, with a view of impressing upon them all their danger from Pan-Germanism, and the unrestricted spread of the German Empire. But it is very questionable if any policy is needed on the part of Great Britain to make the other European nations jealous of Germany. Germany has through all the centuries of European history been ineffective through division. A union of the Teutonic races into one great power would indeed be a portentous phenomenon in Europe. That is precisely what to some extent was accomplished by the consolidation of the German Empire. Austria and France both most strenuously objected and were beaten. But hatred and jealousy of the German Empire were not extinguished at Sedan, not by any means. The German Empire has been distinguished specially by two things, first, a tremendous development of military power, and second, a tremendous development of the commercial spirit. These two features, however, do not change the essential necessity to such an Empire of diverting the minds of its people from their internal affairs as the only means of avoiding its disruption. Militarism and Colonial Empire are absolutely hostile to the essential genius of the Teutonic race, but they are the only remedies for its inevitable tendency to internal disintegration. Therefore, it seems to me that Europe has far more to fear from Germany than Germany has to fear from Europe. Germany can only live by stimulating so-called patriotism by antagonism to other countries, and its antagonism is specially directed against Great Britain at the present time. In Great Britain, the militarists of Germany see the enemy that for domestic reasons, they require. But Germany cannot fight Great Britain with an army, Germany must have a navy as long as she can, before she can build up a navy at all comparable to that of Great Britain, her resources will have broken down under the intolerable strain, and the discontent now rife through the whole country will have broken out in overt action against the Imperial ambition which is devouring the very vitals of the arbitrary union which designates itself the German Empire.

A GOVERNMENT RAILWAY.

The idea appears to be gaining ground in the East that the government should construct an East and West railway track through the barren zone of 1,000 miles which separates the fertile plains of Manitoba from the settled part of Ontario. The proposition, for what reason it is hard to make out, is received with favor by many of the advocates of the government ownership of railways, a circumstance which proves that the prejudices of these excellent people are a good deal stronger than their intellects. If the project be examined a little more closely what does it amount to? The territory to be covered is the most barren portion in the whole of Canada. There is reason for hoping that the portion of this zone lying to the north of the St. Lawrence watershed may develop resources and possibilities not so far apparent of the southern part of it. But that is merely an expectation based upon data which are admittedly incomplete. As a business proposition, such a railway need not be regarded as certain to develop local traffic enough to meet its cost of maintenance, and it certainly is not so regarded by railway builders who are business men. It is a necessary, but costly link in a transcontinental system, whose maintenance and interest charges must be met out of the traffic developed in the territory on either side. If the government built this segment of a transcontinental line, how could the government get enough out of the traffic developed West and East of it, to maintain the track and pay interest on its cost. Such a piece of road would mean a recurrent and heavy charge upon the taxes of Canada. The proposal is not in line with the principle of the government ownership of railways at all. It is an attempt to utilize the sentiment in favor of that principle to relieve a private company of the burden of constructing a piece of road unprofitable in itself, which is nevertheless necessary to the development of a profitable transcontinental system. It is a proposal which is utterly disingenuous and impracticable. It would not enable the government to secure good rates over the rest of the system. If rates were lowered, the cut would come from what the government received over its section. Such a proposal means not a government bonus to the railway, but a government gift of a section of railway to a corporation. Surely no rational advocate of the government ownership of railways would propose to apply it first, in an instance where the government would stand all the cost and the private company reap all the benefit. However, we are not so much concerned with the relation of this proposal to the principle of the government ownership of railways as with its relation to the pocket of the Canadian taxpayer. The government ownership of railways is very attractive in theory, but it is not by any means so attractive in practice. Those who would load the government with functions requiring business economy seem to forget that the kind of man whom his fellows delight to honor in politics is sometimes honest, but never businesslike. The habit of mind of the statesman is as much above, as the habit of mind of the politician is beneath that of the successful railway manager. The confusion thus introduced is further complicated by the dual relation of the railway employee to his employer, that of voter and wage-earner. If a system of government ownership could be devised which would eliminate the political control of the thing owned, there are many things to which the principle of government ownership might be beneficially applied. But no such system has yet been discovered and so far the practical inconveniences of the principle far outweigh its theoretical advantages. If we consider its application in this particular case of a railway across the barren zone, we can think of no circumstance to justify it. The whole cost would come directly upon the taxpayers of Canada, equally upon those to whom the railway would be of little or no benefit, as upon those assisted by it. We in British Columbia would be taxed to bring the wheatfields of the Northwest in touch with the East, but we should be expected to tax ourselves to bring these wheatfields in touch with the Pacific Ocean, a thing equally necessary and equally advantageous to Canada as a whole. If to this proposal were conjoined another proposal for the government to construct a road from the Pacific to the plains, it would at least give a semblance of equality to a doubtful economic experiment.

AN OPINION.

The Great Liberal Party of Canada, the vast aggregation of luminous political personalities who govern us from Ottawa, the men who revoked the iniquitous Conservative policy and inaugurated a period of expansion and prosperity of such tremendous potentiality that it affected not merely Canada, but Great Britain and the United States simultaneously, are sheltering themselves in reference to their disallowance of certain British Columbia legislation, behind an opinion, a mere opinion, an unsupported opinion, of Sir Alexander Campbell, Minister of Justice, in 1884. Are we asleep? Are we dreaming? Is this the year of Grace 1903, or is it not? Would the leaders of the Liberal party, as it exists in Canada today, choose to be arraigned and condemned on the opinion of a Liberal leader of 1884? No! But when they require justification they must hark back to this ancient precedent and base their conduct upon it. How utterly weak! How utterly pusillanimous! It is not the Liberals of Victoria who do so. They are merely following the line adopted by Mr. Fitzpatrick in the House of Commons after Sir Wilfrid Laurier had been reduced to the imbecility of repeated self-contradiction by the searching examination of Mr. R. L. Borden on the subject of disallowance. There are several things which the Liberals from the Hon. Mr. Fitzpatrick down to the correspondent of the Times forget. One of these things is that Mr. Campbell's opinion had nothing whatever to do with any act embodying the principles of the Natal Act, and was given in deference to the opinion of the Colonial office. Another of these things is that the province of British Columbia was strongly advised by the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, to deal with the question of Oriental Immigration along the lines of the Natal Act. Another of these things is that they have made deliberate misstatements as to the existence and purport of correspondence between the Colonial office and the Dominion government, which correspondence we defy them to produce. Another of these things is that this province is in thorough earnest on this question of Oriental Immigration. So far as the engagements of the Japanese government are concerned, they are not keeping the Japanese out of British Columbia, but the Natal Act is keeping them out. Indeed, if it were strictly applied to the whole of Canada, and were effective in keeping out some of the unwholesome creatures whom Mr. Clifford Sifton has imported, it would be a mighty good thing for Canada. The degradation of our national stock is bad, but its total replacement by Orientals is something not to be tolerated where that replacement is threatened.

It is said that a simple "untuned" radiator will upset the "tuned" Marconi receivers and prevent intelligible messages from being received.

It is said that the order of the succession in Russia may be changed so as to permit the eldest daughter of the Czar to ascend the throne.

District Attorney Folk of St. Louis, who purified the politics of that city single-handed, is spoken of as a possible Democratic candidate for president.

A Socialist-Labor candidate will be nominated in the Greenwood riding. The Socialists and the Miners' Union have combined to place a candidate in the field.

In 1871, Herr Bebel was the only Social-Democrat in the German reichstag. That party lies 83 members in the newly-elected reichstag and polled 3,000,000 votes throughout Germany.

During the session at Ottawa now drawing to a close, Mr. R. L. Borden has immensely enhanced his reputation. The Liberal-Conservative party was never under more wise and capable leadership.

Mr. R. J. Younge, secretary of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association declares that according to replies received from employers there is an immediate need for 11,104 mechanics in iron, steel, furniture, cotton, woollen, and other Canadian industries.

The stock of the Atlantic Transport company which was incorporated in the Morgan Shipping Trust sold before the merger for $285 per share. The equivalent securities received by the shareholders in the Shipping Trust are now worth $80.

Our refusal to have a representative at Belgrade is rather a Pecksniffian proceeding. Because our interests there are looked after by the representative of one of the powers which has not so refused. So that the British rebuke depends for its possibility on some other power not going the same length.

In the year 1900, San Francisco's exports to the Orient were valued at $40,000,000, while those from Puget Sound ports amounted to only $10,000,000. The next year San Francisco's exports declined to $35,000,000, while those of the Northern cities increased to $20,000,000. In 1902, San Francisco was passed, the Northern cities having $37,000,000 to San Francisco's $36,000,000. For this year, San Francisco exports are estimated at $38,000,000, and those of Puget Sound ports at $50,000,000.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

APPEAL TO THE LADIES.

Sir,—Why not appeal to the ladies of the city to take an interest in the Tourist Association rooms by supplying fresh flowers every morning?

In Vancouver you will find the Tourist rooms bright and sweet with fresh flowers which are supplied every morning by the thoughtful residents of that city who have gardens.

Why not give our ladies a chance and the rooms on Fort street will not have the dull appearance they have now.

CITIZEN.

LADYSMITH DISTRESS.

Sir,—Re my appeal in last Sunday's issue for aid for distressed families here, permit me to say that I regret that my attention had not been directed until today to the statement of your correspondent here that the report of "starvation" was "without foundation." This report appearing on one page and my appeal appearing on another, places me in a rather questionable light. "Starvation?" I did not say starvation, Mr. Editor. I said "distress." Now let your correspondent ask Dr. Patterson again. Or if he chooses I can give him the names of half a dozen persons here who have been quietly relieving distress and that too, for weeks past, daily hoping that a settlement would be accomplished. But as matters seemed to be getting worse and their own resources were all but exhausted, I felt the only thing to do was to appeal and let the public know the truth.

Information on matters so serious should be perfectly accurate, Mr. Editor, and also perfectly impartial. Had you applied to me direct I could have given you such facts as would have prevented public misapprehension.

GORDON TANNER.
Methodist Minister of Ladysmith.

PRESS COMMENT.

But figures do not tell the story of a strike. There is much that never will be known of suffering and sorrow in a strike. Sir Frederick Borden has been talking of the appointment of a commission to study the commercial situation and make tariff recommendations. The ministers are falling in with general opinion in one thing at least. They admit that they do not know enough about the country or its affairs to inaugurate a transportation policy or reform a tariff. If any one was to repeat now the old boast that Sir Wilfrid Laurier's was "the strongest business government Canada ever saw" people would laugh consumedly.—Montreal Gazette.

It is argued in view of the general hostility of employers to the walking delegate, and the dissatisfaction of many workingmen, that it would be the part of wisdom for labor unions to do away with that official altogether. He lives and thrives on the strike between labor and capital. A strike involves no less to him as it does to the bona fide workingmen, and in many cases he is a hindrance rather than a favorable agency in promoting a settlement. The men most concerned, financially or otherwise, in a labor dispute are the men who are apt to be most reasonable in drawing up terms of settlement.—Montreal Herald.

Over 9,000,000 black-skinned people are now living in the United States. They have about doubled in numbers since Abraham Lincoln signed the emancipation proclamation. Counting in the dark-skinned inhabitants of our insular possessions, 18,500,000 colored people are living under our flag. Our negro population owns more property than is generally supposed. Nearly 4 per cent of the total assessable property of Virginia belongs to them. In Georgia alone they are assessed on $15,000,000 worth of property. Of the 1,400,000 heads of colored families in the entire country in 1900, 204,000, or nearly one-fifth of them all, own the homes and farms on which they live, where forty years ago they did not own even their own persons.—New York World.

QUALITY OR PRICE.

Merchants' Record.

Of all the many problems that arise in the course of every merchant's business, there is none more persistent or more difficult of solution than the question of "quality" against "cheapness." To sell, at a reasonable profit, strictly dependable goods to the people who are willing to pay for quality, or to cater to the class which clamors for bargains and sets prices before all else—that is the question; and most merchants compromise. Fifty try, and some of them very successfully, to meet the demands of all classes of customers. It is a reasonable assumption that the average merchant would rather handle goods of unquestionable quality. He would naturally prefer to deal with people who want quality and are willing to pay for it. This class of trade is much more profitable and is more satisfactory in every way. On the other hand, there is no getting away from the fact that cheapness has a very strong drawing power.

While it is true that people who want cheap goods simply because they are cheap, are not the most desirable customers, it is also true that they represent a class that is numerically too strong to ignore. They demand cheapness, and if the merchant gets their trade he must do so by handling cheap goods. Cheapness necessarily implies inferiority, and inferiority can only result in the dissatisfaction of the customer. When the goods prove unsatisfactory the price is forgotten, and the store gets a black eye that is not at all deserved.

It is true that cheap goods are sometimes fairly satisfactory. Some people are reasonable enough not to expect to get more than they pay for. They are the exception, however. Most buyers of the cheapest kind of goods expect quite as much from them as they do of the best, and herein lies the menace to the merchant who handles the inferior goods. Casual buyers are often influenced by cheapness, and low prices will attract a great part of the transient trade; but a truly successful business cannot be built up on the custom of occasional buyers. The merchant must look ahead of the immediate present. He must build for the future. The very best foundation for any business is public confidence, and quality will do much more toward gaining confidence and esteem than will mere cheapness.

The merchant who talks quality has some decided advantages over his competitor who can only say that his goods are cheaper. There is a finality about the term, "the best," that cannot be gainsaid. If a merchant sells the best goods, no competitor can say more. He is in an unassailable position, and cannot be out-talked on that point. On the other hand, cheapness is altogether relative. The merchant who makes price the first consideration is talking for every competitor who sells cheap goods. He has but one talking point, and when the shopper comes back after pricing his competitor's goods, the only way he has of strengthening his argument is to further lower his price. Unfortunately the merchant cannot always order his business in exact accordance with his wishes. His business policy is to a considerable extent dependent upon the resources of the people from whom he draws his trade. He cannot sell high-grade goods to customers who demand the cheapest, but he should not over-estimate the demand for cheap goods. That many people consider price first should not blind him to the fact that there are many others who are looking for quality. While it may be necessary to make some concessions to gain the trade of the "cheap" people, he must never lose sight of his main purpose, which is to establish a reputation for the quality and reliability of his goods. In this day of advertising and keen competition the merchant who is preaching "quality" sometimes finds it harder to stick to his text when his competitors are all shouting "price" with the full power of their lungs. The spirit of competition prompts him to join in the chorus and shout "price" too, but he must remember that he has a different object. He is building, not for to-day, but for to-morrow and next year and for the years to come. He is trying to convince the people of the genuine merit of his goods, not of their cheapness. He is trying to gain and to hold the friendship of his customers who realize that cheapness is incompatible with true worth, for these are the people who will prove a permanent benefit to his business.

Fruit Packages

A full line of packages consisting of strawberry crates and baskets, cherry boxes, plum crates, apple and pear boxes, etc., are carried in stock by

F. R. STEWART & CO.,

Wholesale Fruit Merchants. 40 Yates St.

B. C. STEAM DYE WORK,
141 Yates Street, Victoria.
Ladies' and Gents' garments and household furnishings cleaned, dyed or pressed equal to new.

FOR SALE—Two-year-old prize-winning registered Jersey bull; also four yearlings. Five registered Jersey cows. Ten head Jersey heifers. Ten grade Shorthorns. Collie pups. Glen Tana Farm, Box 1907, Spokane, Wash. 33