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STABLE GOVERNMENT.

The Times objects to the claim that the improved condition of business in British Columbia and the greater confidence of investors is in any way due to the fact that the advent to power of the present ministry has given the province "stable government." We admit that an Opposition paper may, and indeed ought, to criticize freely the policy and acts of the administration, but this is no reason why it should extend its hostility to the province. It is easy to understand why the Times should feel called upon to say all the harsh things it can invent about Mr. McBride and his colleagues, for that is the way in which it believes political controversies ought to be conducted, but it is utterly inexplicable why it should claim that we have not stable government in this province. It is quite familiar with the history of the last fifteen years and must know that until federal party lines were followed in provincial affairs, conditions were most unstable. It surely has not forgotten the speeches made in the House at the time the resignation of the Prior ministry was announced, and the unanimous expression of opinion to the effect that objectionable as the introduction of federal cleavage lines were to many, it was recognized as the only means whereby stability of administration could be secured. Before that time succeeding ministries, were on tenter hooks during the whole of their brief existence and the frequent changes in premiers and the almost continual election turmoil had the effect of creating great distrust in everybody's mind. When Mr. Turner, after his laborious and successful premiership, was unwarrantably dismissed by the Lieutenant Governor, a period of political distraction ensued. First we had Mr. Robert Beaven as premier; to him followed Mr. Semlin and after a short time we had Mr. Martin and his extraordinary administration. The public throughout Canada and all that part of the investing world which took an interest in British Columbia politics were amazed and alarmed at the political circus in progress here. The first indication of returning sanity was the selection of Mr. Dunsmuir as premier and the rallying of all the then stronger political elements in the province to his support. But stability had not yet been reached. Mr. Dunsmuir's premiership was rendered irksome to him by the difficulty of reconciling deverse interests, and he gave place to Col. Prior, whose official career was too short for the development of any improvement in political conditions. In six years the province had had six premiers, and it would certainly be difficult to suggest anything much more unstable. But with the advent of Mr. McBride to power a new condition was inaugurated and no one can, with any regard to truth, deny that since then there has been a complete change. The people of British Columbia and those abroad, who take a close interest in our affairs, know that the period of frequent changes is at an end, unless exceptional circumstances arise in the future. When the next general election is held one of three things will happen. Either Mr. McBride will be returned with a large majority—an event which the Colonist is satisfied is already assured, or the Liberals will have a majority, or by reason of there being several political groups, who will put candidates in the field, the political constitution of the House will be such that in coalition between two or more of the groups will be necessary, in order that the government may be carried on.

This being the case, we submit for the consideration of the electorate generally that the existing condition of things is so very satisfactory that, in the interest of the province, and in the interests of further stability of government, Mr. McBride should be returned with a greatly increased number of supporters. We have had stable government since 1903. Why take any chances of a return to the confused politics previous to that date? Neither Mr. Green nor any one else, speaking on behalf of the present ministry, has made any claim for the government that cannot be fully justified by the facts. We have an expanding revenue. Grave questions of public policy have been satisfactory dealt with. There has been an absence of scandals, though not an absence of slanders, and the Opposition press confuses the two things. There has been stable government. There has been wise legislation. Why make a change?

MONEY IN FARMING.

We reprint this morning from the Toronto Globe a summary of an address delivered before the Ontario Experimental Union by Professor Hays, assistant secretary for agriculture for the United States. The points brought out are of the greatest possible interest, not to farmers only, but to every one, for they go to the very foundation of national prosperity. In too many instances farming is regarded as the last resort of the unambitious and is carried on in a spirit of protest. The cheap humorists of the city newspapers find in the tiller of the soil a mark for their jests, and the slaves of the desk and counter assume an air of superiority when they meet the man who toils in the fields. Yet what is it that has caused America to enjoy of recent years such unprecedented prosperity that a cry is going up everywhere for more men? Nothing but the success which has attended the labors of the farmer. Therefore everything that tends to increase the value of the returns for such labor is of importance to the whole community. Farming is not yet upon the basis that it should be, for the reason that only recently, comparatively speaking, have men begun to devote scientific attention to it, and the subject being many-sided and full of difficulties, a long series of observations and experiments was necessary before the advocates of scientific farming were warranted in claiming that they had demonstrated that something more than manual labor and chance were to be taken into account in order to produce the best results. The everyday farmer used to have his share of fun with "the scientific farmer." But things are changing and the man with the hoe is beginning to respect the man in the laboratory.

As illustrating the immense value of properly conducted experiments, Professor Hays showed what value would be accomplished in Ontario by reason of the work done at that most excellent institution, the Guelph Agricultural College. He pointed out that it would equal nearly a billion dollars in forty years. This is in the increased productiveness of the farms, and means the enrichment of the country to that extent without an addition to the cultivated acreage or a material increase in the labor expended. Possibly it means a reduction in the latter item. This is something remarkable, and far transcends in importance any benefit that the country can hope to derive from any other source of activity in which a government can engage. One value of these experiments is that they enable a farmer to realize better results with less work and from smaller acreage, a highly important consideration in these days, when population is becoming more dense and labor more expensive. We are in receipt of a letter from an esteemed correspondent in Alberta which is pertinent to this subject. Our correspondent thinks that land in Vancouver Island is too expensive to make it possible to farm it to advantage, and much as he would like to come to this part of Canada to live, he hesitates about doing so because he fears that farming cannot be profitable here. Yesterday the Colonist was favored with a call from two Ontario men, who took the same view. This matter is worth some attention.

Our callers said that land was too high here for a farmer who proposed to raise grain and roots and feed cattle. They thought that no man could afford to pay more than $50 an acre for such land, and of course as we all know cleared land cannot be bought on Vancouver Island in many places for this price. We are by no means sure that, when they take everything into consideration, they would find land at $150 per acre too expensive for that purpose. It would be, if they adopted the methods of agriculture followed in those parts of the continent where land is cheap: but it might not be if they pursued intense farming. The nature of our seasons is such that a farmer ought to be able to get at least twice as much per acre out of his soil as he could in the East. Few people have ever taken the trouble to consider the enormous waste of capital in land that has been cleared and not cultivated. When allowance is made for loss by reason of fencing, especially by "snake" fences, stone piles, useless trees, needless roads, stumps of formidable dimensions, and places that can be readily drained, the percentage of a farmer's capital that is locked up in unproductive cleared land will be found to be surprisingly large. If a merchant locked up a similar percentage of his capital in dead stock, he would have his nose to the grindstone all the time, and would be lucky if he escaped bankruptcy. When a man pays $150 and upwards for land for farming purposes he will, unless he is very foolish, see to it that not much if it remains idle. It is because he follows this principle, and makes his land bring him in something continually, that the Chinese gardener makes money. While we should not by any means recommend an Eastern man to come here and buy expensive farm lands for the purpose of raising beef cattle, we are not disposed to admit that it would be a losing business. Our soil can, however, be much more profitably used otherwise by most people, and this brings us to our correspondent's letter. He believes that our grain yields are not as heavy as they are in the prairie region, but we think that he has scarcely had fair opportunities of forming an opinion, because all statistics are to the contrary of what he says. He admits that the present prices of dairy products, eggs and fruit are satisfactory, but thinks they are not likely to last. To the latter part of this opinion we take a very decided exception. As we pointed out the other day, there is a market in British Columbia for 2,000,000 pounds more butter every year than is now produced here, and the demand is steadily increasing. The nature of the industries of this province is such that there will be a sale for more than the farmers can supply for very many years to come. The same thing is true of poultry, which is very profitable here. In regard to fruit, our correspondent thinks we are at the mercy of the railroads, and therefore there is a poor outlook in that direction. In this respect he is at fault, because fruit growers on Vancouver Island are not at the mercy of any one railway, even if there were any reason to fear that any single railway company, if it had the power, would be so blind to its own interests to put a freight charge that would prevent freight from being shipped. The Canadian Pacific and the Great Northern can both give transportation to Central Canada, where the market for our fruit now is, and besides this there is the British market and the Oriental market, where our fruit can be disposed of. It is true enough that here, as everywhere, there are drawbacks in connection with farming, but, as the proof of the pudding is the eating, so the proof that farming pays on Vancouver Island is chiefly in the fact that the farmers are all prosperous. And the proof that it will continue to be profitable is shown by the fact that the industries, that will be developed in the province, and the growth of large cities at railway termini will create a demand that will far outstrip any supply, which there is any good reason for believing is yet in sight.

MUSIC IN SCHOOLS.

The proposal that music shall be taught systematically in the public schools is worthy of very serious consideration. At the same time, if it is adopted, good judgment must be exercised in carrying it out. While every child ought to sing, many of them cannot, and although it is true that many children have naturally good voices, which only need to be brought out, it ought not to be forgotten that some have not. Disregard of this natural distinction between children has in some cities been the cause of injustice being done. Proficiency in music ought not to be taken into account in the grading of pupils.

There is no doubt as to the value of singing as a branch of study. Perhaps there is nothing that has a more beneficial effect upon the health, provided instruction is correctly given. All of us breathe, but very few of us breathe as we ought to. Experience has shown that exercises in breathing in connection with singing have an admirable effect upon the general health. This is perhaps, in the opinion of some, putting the matter on rather a low plane, but we do not think so.

As to the value of song as a source of pleasure, and as an upbuilder of character, too much cannot be said. It is a theme upon which much might be written. We hope the School Trustees will give the matter their best consideration: but at the same time we think we ought to add, in the interest of our schools generally, that there are many other things which call for attention, and that the teaching of music is perhaps not the most important.

Public opinion will support the government in legislation to prevent strikes and lock-outs in coal mines. Individuals cannot be permitted to jeopardize the safety of communities.

A SPLENDID SHOWING.

The interview with the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, which is printed in this morning's Colonist, discloses an extremely gratifying condition of things. The current fiscal year will show a revenue of about $1,000,000 from the department of which Mr. Green is the very efficient head, a gain roughly speaking, of a quarter of a million dollars over last year and more than half a million dollars since the present government came into power. More remarkable still is the increase since 1893, when the total revenue was only $70,000. The great advance in recent years is in part due to the general prosperity of the country and to the greater confidence felt by men of capital in the resources of British Columbia and the stability of investments here; but it is also due in no small measure to the policy inaugurated by the present Chief Commissioner, adopted by his colleagues and endorsed by the legislature. One feature of the system, which is productive of such excellent results is that so far as timber licenses, granted since the legislation instituted by the present government are concerned, the annual charge as well as the royalty may be increased from year to year as the conditions of business warrant and the needs of the country demand. We congratulate Mr. Green very heartily upon the showing he is able to make.

WHO IS AN INDIAN?

In regard to the rights of the Songhees there are some things to be remembered. They do not own the Reservation, but only have the use of it, as long as the statutes of Canada provide. It has pleased parliament to declare that certain people shall be regarded as Indians, so as to enjoy the privileges and wardship extended to persons so designated. The definition of an Indian by act of parliament is purely arbitrary. This is the definition: "Any person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band; any child of such person; any woman lawfully married to such person." This is purely an arbitrary definition; that is to say it might just as well have been something else. Parliament might have declared that only persons of full Indian blood should be regarded as Indians. We do not find any definition of the term "Indian" in any of the old British Columbia statutes or ordinances, but in the Ordinance providing for the taking of the testimony of persons other than those of the white races, the expressions ("Aboriginal Natives" and "Natives of Mixed Blood" are used, clearly showing that in those days, and this was during the regime of Sir James Douglas, a distinction was made between full blood Indians and persons of mixed blood. The definition which puts them both in the same class, provided they are reputed to belong to a particular band, is of comparatively recent date, and could not have been in the mind of the parties to the original arrangement, called by some a treaty, whereby the Songhees were given possession of the reservation.

Seeing then that parliament saw fit in its wisdom to enlarge the meaning of the term Indian, it follows that parliament can, if it sees fit, restrict the legal meaning of the term. Out of consideration to a people, whose adaptability to the conditions of civilization was not very great, parliament saw fit to say that some, who would never have been deemed Aboriginal Natives in the days of Sir James Douglas and the old Vancouver Island legislature, shall be brought within the meaning of the laws relating to Indians; but if such persons are disposed to presume upon the privileges and protection accorded to them by parliament, they need not be surprised if the authority that conferred these upon them finds itself compelled to take them away. An impression seems to prevail among the so-called Indians, as well as among a great many white people, that as long as a person has a drop of Indian blood in his veins and remains a member of a band, he is invested with certain treaty rights that they may not be interfered with. The discussion of the Songhees question has accentuated this misconception. It is time it was removed. Parliament could, without the slightest infraction of any principle of right or any obligation real or imaginary conferred upon the Songhees by virtue of the arrangement entered into between that tribe and Sir James Douglas, declare that no one, unless he could show that he is descended in all lines from Aboriginal Natives, should have any right whatever to participate in the advantages secured to Indians by treaty, agreement or legislation. If this were done, the Songhees Reserve question might very speedily become a thing of the past. We do not wish to take the attitude of one who makes threats, but we do say to the members of the Songhees band that the rights and privileges which they claim are, so far as the most of them individually are concerned, purely by the grace of the parliament of Canada, and not by virtue of any imaginary treaty rights.

AS TO THE WEATHER.

An impression seems to have gone abroad that wet weather is a serious drawback to this country. This is not because enough statistics have not been printed to show that this is not the case, but because to most people such statistics convey no real idea of what the weather is like. So many inches of precipitation, so many hours of bright sunshine, so many cloudy days—these dry facts are so many words and figures and nothing more. It is difficult to describe Victoria winters for the reason that they differ so greatly from each other. Two years ago a prominent railway man reached Victoria in February and remained here for five weeks. He said that during his stay there were only two afternoons when he did not go out for a ride on horseback, and he rode in an ordinary business suit. Newcomers may appreciate our average wet season when they are told that the present one is unusually wet, and they know how many beautiful days and how few real stormy days we have had. During the last two or three winters we have had snow only once each winter in sufficient depth to whiten the fields. It must be seven or eight years since we had enough for sleighing. There has been a little skating on ice formed over very shallow water nearly every winter for some time, but not in the city or within three or four miles of it. Last winter we had very little rain and a great deal of bright sunshine. Thirteen years ago we had heavy snow, which remained on the ground for a week or two. Quite a number of years ago there was snow on the ground for a considerable period and fairly cold weather. From all accounts the winter of 1861-2 was exceptionally severe with much ice and snow. With such diversity it is hard to describe our winters in general terms. The expression "rainy season" is only correct in contrast to the dryness of the summer; we have nothing like the rainy season of the tropics. Speaking generally one might say that we rarely have cold days; but frequently warm ones during the winter; that heavy rainstorms are not common, and that 24 hours continuous rainfall are of rare occurrence. Rainy nights are usually followed by cloudy or fine days, and rainy days by fine nights. Freezing weather is experienced every year, but rarely are more than a few degrees of frost registered. Only a few instances of zero weather are reported in the history of Victoria. And to answer a question which is put by many people, the rainfall is by no means a serious drawback to ordinary occupations.

CANADIAN MINERALS.

The Geological Survey of Canada is always a year or more behind in publishing its reports, which we presume is to a certain extent unavoidable, although it is to be hoped that when the Department of Mines is established, the statistics can be got before the public while they are of more present value than they can be under the existing arrangement. The last report brings the returns down to 1904. The first table gives the annual product during the decade ending that year, and from it we learn that the mineral production of Canada increased from $20,505,917 in 1895 to $60,073,897 in 1905, but there was a falling off after 1901, which was the banner year, its product having reached upwards of $65,000,000 in value. The non-metallic products reached their highest figure in 1904; the metallic in 1901 when they were valued at over $41,000,000 as compared with nearly $31,000,000 for 1904. The figures for 1901 were swelled by the output of the Klondike mines, and this remark applies also to the returns for 1888, 1899, 1902 and 1903. The figures for 1904 may be considered as the normal output, and comparing them with those of 1897, which was the year before the Klondike yield found its place in the returns and may therefore be taken as the normal yield of pre-Klondike days, it shows a gain from $13,000,000 of metallic productions to nearly $31,000,000. Of course these figures give no idea of the present condition of the mining industry of Canada, but they are useful for purposes of comparison.

An interesting table is that relating to the production of iron. We find that in 1904 the tons of pig iron manufactured from Canadian ore were 68,297, while the tons manufactured from imported ore were 236,157. Thus it appears that the greater part of the bounty paid has been for the advantage of the owners of mines outside of Canada. This gives force to the contention made by the Colonist that in the incidence of the new bounties the fact, that any new plant established in British Columbia would use domestic ore only, should be considered. As showing the market in Canada for iron and its products it may be mentioned that the imports of pig iron, iron and steel goods into Canada in 1904 amounted to over $40,000,000 in value, while the total value of pig iron made in the country was only $3,687,985. It need scarcely be added that pig iron being the basis of all iron and steel products these figures show the proportion the iron products made in the Dominion bear to the total quantity consumed.

We repeat an expression of a hope that the new department to be organized will be able to devise a plan by which its statistics can be made of more value, and in saying this we do not wish to be understood as reflecting in any way upon the highly useful work of the Geological Survey.

THE GENERAL ADVANTAGE.

A correspondent, who writes briefly about the fuel famine in the central part of the Continent, which he thinks is due to the passage into private hands of things, which the public must use, and is only to be remedied by "the masses, who are gaining a better knowledge of cause and effect in the economic world," sends us an extract from some observations by Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, which are reproduced below. Before discussing the general principle, which our correspondent thinks is involved in the shortage of fuel, we may say that it is not wholly due to any defect in our economic system, but to a very large degree to a lack of foresight. The population of Central Canada and the parts of the United States, now suffering from an insufficient supply of coal, has largely increased during the past year and the consumption of coal in all lines has greatly expanded, yet the coal dealers do not appear to have thought it necessary to lay in any additional reserve of fuel. Then also the season has been of such a character over a large area as to call for a larger consumption of fuel for domestic purposes than in ordinary years, and these things combined with the strikes have brought about the conditions now existing, and which we are happy to be able to think will be remedied at an early day. At the same time, it seems evident that steps must be taken, apart from anything that coal mine owners and dealers may do, to prevent a recurrence of a shortage of fuel during the winter. As we look upon it the government has a direct duty to discharge in the premises. It may lie in the direction of opening and operating coal mines, but as it has not hitherto been the policy of the government to carry on industrial enterprises in opposition to private concerns, we hardly think it reasonable to expect that such a radically new departure will be taken in this particular instance. We venture to repeat the suggestion made the other day that the Dominion government shall maintain a coal reserve.

The quotation from Lord Coleridge to which our correspondent refers is as follows:

"The general advantage in former days was absolutely and avowedly regarded, and when rights of private property interfered with it such rights were summarily set aside; and, while property itself was acknowledged, the laws of its enjoyment were regulated, according to what was thought to be the general advantage. All laws of property must stand upon the foot of the general advantage, for a country belongs to its inhabitants; and in what proportions and by what rules its inhabitants are to own its property must be settled by the law; and the moment a fragment of the people set up rights as inherent in them and not founded upon the public good, plain absurdities follow, for laws of property are like all other laws, to be changed when the public good requires it. It would be well, indeed, that the owners of property in land or money, from the largest to the smallest, should recognize that their title to the enjoyment of it must rest on the same foundation, and that the mode and measure of the enjoyment of the common stock of the state, if it injures the state, can no more be defended and will no more be endured by a free people than any other public mischief or nuisance."

These observations ought to be very seriously considered by the people, no matter what their views on economic questions may be. Every careful student of the evolution of the Common Law knows that His Lordship has, in the language quoted, only defined what is elementary. The whole body of the Common Law is based upon the general advantage of the public. Private tenure of property is conditional upon its being employed, if not actively for the public advantage, at least in such a manner that it shall not be to the public disadvantage. We recognize this fundamental principle in scores of statutes. Examples of it are in evidence constantly. A city wishes to open a street; private ownership of property must not stand in the way. A man wishes to destroy certain property; the law will not permit him to destroy it by fire, if it is in such a position that by doing so he may endanger the property of other people. There is a fundamental maxim of the law which declares that no man shall use what is his own in a manner that will injure any one else. In recent years the development of business, the creation of new interests, the manifold ramifications of human industry have caused the enactment of laws, whereby corporate bodies have been called into existence, and legislative bodies have not always been as careful as they might have been to see that the fundamental principle mentioned has been safeguarded, but there is warrant in the Common Law for the contention that no franchises or privileges can be granted without this implied qualification, namely, that the public have the right to annul them, whenever their enjoyment by private individuals works to the public disadvantage. This is not a new doctrine; it is as old as the Common Law of England, which comes down to us from a forgotten antiquity. It was this doctrine which the barons enforced at Runymede, when they wrested The Great Charter from King John. It was this doctrine which parliament enforced when they sent King Charles to the scaffold. It is by virtue of this doctrine, formally declared in by the Lords and Commons of Great Britain, that the Crown is vested in the family of which His Majesty Edward VII is the present head.

There is another maxim, which is not confined to English Common Law, but finds a place in every system of jurisprudence, namely, that "the safety of the state is the supreme law." Indeed the quotation from Lord Coleridge is only an amplification of this. Everything must yield to the general advantage. If this principle were more generally understood, there would not be such haste on the part of many well-meaning people to follow after strange economic gods. The Common Law of England contains within itself all that is necessary to protect the interests of the weak and curb the agressiveness of the strong.

THE SONGHEES RESERVE.

The presence of Mr. Whyte, second vice-president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, in this city and his observations, which are given in another column, emphasizes in the strongest possible way the importance of action being taken at once to settle the question of the Songhees Reserve.

Conversation with many people satisfies us that the suggestion made in the Colonist, to the effect that the Indians should be removed to a part of the reservation, and that the remainder should be devoted to railway purposes, will be generally satisfactory.

If this is not done immediately, the railway company will be compelled to place their freight yards at Russell Station, and this will be an exceedingly serious thing for the merchants of the city.

The Board of Trade ought not to lose an hour in taking such steps as may be necessary to bring about an immediate settlement of this matter on the lines suggested, if no other and better line is possible. Let the strongest kind of pressure be brought to bear upon Mr. Templeman to secure this settlement at once.

It means a very great deal to the city—more than perhaps appears on the surface. Let the action be prompt and continuous. Let us not cease agitating until we succeed. We will succeed if we make the effort that is in our power.

Chief Cooper says that the Indians will not listen to any such suggestion as has been made above. Then they must be compelled to. There is such a thing as presuming on good nature, and if Chief Cooper will be advised by those who wish him and his fellow-Songhees well, he will get off his high horse just as quick as his dignity will let him.

SELF-INTEREST.

The Times thinks "it may even be that self-interest is at the root of the advocacy of a West Coast terminus and port." This is a very extraordinary suggestion. The idea that the government of Canada should consider the advisability of providing the shortest and best route "from the plains of Alberta to a port on the West side of Vancouver Island" emanated from the Royal Transportation, whose language has been quoted above. What does the Times mean by suggesting that this is due to self-interest? The Commission was composed of well known men, eminent in business the world, and selected by the Dominion government because of their wide experience and great general knowledge. It is an astounding thing that the newspaper of the Minister of Inland Revenue should throw out an insinuation that these men were influenced by self-interest in making this recommendation.

So far as the Colonist has been able to observe, there has been no advocacy on the part of any one of "a West Coast terminus and port." If the Times had taken the trouble to read the Memorial of the Board of Trade, which bears among other signatures those of the Times Printing and Publishing Company and the Editor of the Times, it would have found the following paragraph:

"5. The harbors on the ocean-front of Vancouver Island, including Victoria, are in point of accessibility from the ocean, superior to all other harbors on the Western coast of America north of San Francisco. Your Memorialists, without disparagement to other available harbors, refer especially to Victoria, including therein Esquimalt, and they desire to point out that the approach to Victoria is by way of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the entrance to which from the ocean is exceptionally favorable by reason of the long distance out to sea to which serviceable soundings extend. The 100-fathom line, which at the northern end of Vancouver Island is from 8 to 10 miles off shore is from 40 to 50 miles out at sea from the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. If this great natural advantage were supplemented by a proper system of aids to navigation, the approach to the Strait would be one of the safest waterways in the world. The entrance to the Strait, that is from Cape Flattery on the south of Bonilla Point on the north, is 16 miles wide, and from the entrance to Victoria the course is free from obstruction and danger and can be safely navigated by the largest vessels at any stage of the tide, in all weathers and under any atmospheric conditions."

Our contemporary would also have found in the Memorial referred to, which by the way was printed in its own columns, the following paragraph:

"8. Improvements in the inner and outer harbor of Victoria on the lines recommended by the Commission on Transportation, or such modification of them as shall be deemed advisable after full investigation, will create at Victoria a harbor capable of accommodating many vessels of the largest size, and one paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of this memorial, will be unequaled by any other harbor now available, or that can be made hereafter available, on the western coast of America for the purpose of commerce

It would also have seen that the Memorial closes with the following request:

"Your Memorialists therefore respectfully request that the aforegoing statement of the Royal Commission on Transportation may receive your most favorable consideration at the earliest possible day, and that the establishment of all-rail connection between Vancouver Island and the Mainland may be adopted by the government of Canada as a part of its National Transcontinental Policy."

In the face of these facts, it would be interesting to know what warrant the Times has to accuse any one of being influenced by self-interest in advocating the early construction of the Seymour Narrows' Bridge. Not only does it make this insinuation, but it couples with it contemptuous remarks designed for an other purpose whatever than to injure some one, whom it has not the courage to name. We repeat our very great regret that the Times finds itself in this matter compelled to take an attitude contrary to that taken by its owner, by its Editor, by the Board of Trade, by the City Council and by every leading business house in the city of Victoria. We have asked it to dismiss politics from the discussion of matters pertaining to the welfare of Victoria. We now ask it to dismiss all nastiness.

THE INTERPROVINCIAL CONFERENCE.

We invite careful perusal of the official report of the Inter-Provincial Conference at Ottawa, which will be printed in the Colonist tomorrow, pressure of advertising at the last moment crowding it out today. There can be no claim that this report has been got up in the interest of the provincial government, yet it makes Mr. McBride's position absolutely unassailable. The first point which we note is that it disposes completely of the preposterous claim advanced by the Opposition press that Mr. McBride refused the additional subsidies which all the provinces are to share in common. It will be noted that it was not until after the general resolution had been passed and a committee had been appointed to present it to the federal government, that Mr. McBride made his plea for special consideration. He could, if he had wished, have made no special claim and permitted the conference to pass on to the consideration of matters not of a financial nature; but if he had done so, it might have been said by the other premiers and by the Dominion government that, by his failure to urge the special case of the province, he had waived it. It would certainly have been made the basis of very severe criticism against him in this province, if he had come home without making an effort to secure recognition in keeping with the well understood wishes of the people of British Columbia, a criticism that he would have found himself very much embarrassed to meet.

We draw attention to the first paragraph in the memorandum submitted by Mr. McBride to the Conference, in which he reiterates his adherence to the general resolution on better terms so far as it is not inconsistent with the matters advanced in the memorandum. Up to this point we undertake to say that every man in British Columbia will unhesitatingly endorse his attitude. He then says that the government of British Columbia cannot accept the general resolution as "a final and full settlement of its demands." This position will not be called in question by a single voter in this province.

The general statement just mentioned is followed by the argument for special consideration, with which we are all familiar, but which has never been stated more succinctly and convincingly than in the memorandum referred to. After stating the case fully, Mr. McBride asked that there might be a complete investigation of the whole question by a commission consisting of one person to be chosen by the Dominion government, one by the Provincial government and one by the Colonial Office. It will be observed that Mr. McBride did not ask the provincial premiers to pass upon the case for British Columbia. Thus another of the criticisms of the Opposition is completely and officially disposed of.

The next stage in the case is the position of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. He admitted the principle embodied in the memorandum submitted by Mr. McBride, but did not agree that it was a proper subject for a commission, claiming, on the contrary, that it was strictly within the scope of the deliberations of the conference, and he "strongly advised Mr. McBride" to leave the matter in the hands of the conference. There was some discussion after this, but the official report does not tell us what was said. We know, however, from Mr. McBride that, acting on the suggestion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, he submitted an offer based upon the principle that, as the exceptional character of the conditions in British Columbia is permanent, the relief ought also to be permanent. If up to this point Mr. McBride did anything wrong, it would be interesting to have some one point out in what particular his conduct was open to criticism. Was it in accepting the general better terms resolution? Was it in declining to accept the general resolution in full and final settlement of the claims of the province? Was it in reiterating the special claims of the province? Was it in asking that those special claims should be passed upon by some other tribunal than one composed of the provincial premiers? Was it in yielding to Sir Wilfrid Laurier's "strong" advice to submit the claims to the conference? Was it in claiming that the exceptional consideration extended to the province should be of a permanent character? We venture to say that every man in British Columbia, if he honestly speaks his mind, will answer unhesitatingly that in neither of these things did Mr. McBride do anything wrong, but that in every respect he followed the course expected of him by the people of his province. Least of all can the supporters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier protest that he should not have acceded to his request and placed our claims before the Conference.

All that remain to be considered is what the Conference decided to offer this province and Mr. McBride's action thereupon. We direct special attention to the terms of the offer. The $100,000 a year for ten years, while not expressly offered in full and final settlement, could only be so understood in view of Mr. McBride's refusal to accept the other resolution in such settlement, and also in view of the fact that it recited that it was given in consideration of the exceptional claims of the province. This offer Mr. McBride refused to accept.

The only question remaining to be asked is: Ought Mr. McBride to have accepted this offer?

Unless the local Opposition are prepared to say that he should have done so, they have absolutely no case against him. Not one of them has yet ventured to take such a position. Not one of them will now venture to take such a position. Not one of them will deny that Mr. McBride did perfectly right in refusing to accept the offer. This being the case, we would like to be informed wherein Mr. McBride's course at the Conference is open to adverse criticism by any one having the welfare of British Columbia at heart. Let him be tried by the record. Never mind what some one may or may not have said. Never mind how the press of the Eastern provinces regard the matter. Take the official record and judge him by that. His position is absolutely unassailable. From beginning to end he stands where every British Columbian would wish the representative of this province to stand upon this important question.

There is a great shortage in the coal product of the State of Washington. The increased output has by no means kept pace with the increased demand.

The people of Seattle want $15,000,000 spent, principally in torpedo boats, for the defence of the Pacific Coast. It would come cheaper in the end to treat Japan decently.

If you do not know what to do with the money you have made in real estate, you ought to take up the new $100,000,000 stock issue of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway.

Some Chinamen who were detained in London under the new Immigration law, have been allowed to remain in England, having been promised work at the docks in Liverpool. The all-pervading Asiatic is becoming more and more in evidence every day.

The Themis struck within two miles of the light on Scarlet Point, but the light was not visible. The night was intensely dark and there was a fierce southeasterly wind blowing. We are not told whether or not there was rain. There could hardly be fog with such a wind. Inquiry will probably show why the light could not be seen, and in the meantime judgment should be suspended.

The Associated Press correspondents have taken to guessing about the relations between Japan, Russia and the United States. They are very poor guessers. They are absurd enough to suppose that Japan wants to become engaged in war with Russia and the United States. This is the sort of "news" that may always be looked for about this time of year. We may expect very shortly a story telling of the plans of the British government in this connection.

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