The Colonist.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22.

IS IT A GREEK GIFT?

No forecast of the result of the negotiations now pending between the Ottawa and Washington governments can be otherwise than uncertain, owing to an unknown quantity that must be taken into account. This quantity is the object of the new American departure. What is the aim of the movement which has led the President to instruct Mr. Kasson to consider the subject of Canadian rec'procity? No one will be so absurd as to suppose that it is a desire to benefit the Dominion. It can scarcely be a wish to remove all causes of friction between the two countries, for too many opportunities to advance so excellent an object have been allowed to pass unimproved to render that likely. There is no reason to suppose that the United States has received any new light as to the commercial advantages to be derived from closer relations with Canada. We think we must seek in quite another direction for an explanation of this new departure.

Whatever may be the measure of credit attaching, accidentally or otherwise, to Sir Wilfrid Laurier in connection with the impetus given to the imperialistic movement by the Jubilee festivities, there is no room for doubt that the consolidation of the Empire is proceeding apace, and that, in the mighty national arch which will overshadow the globe, Canada will be the keystone. Nearly everyone in the United States has looked forward to the time when the Union Jack would leave this continent forever, and the delay in the consummation of this desire has been regarded only as the ripening process in the rich plum soon to drop from the parent limb. It was the hope of United States politicians that the advent of the Liberal party to power would advance the cause of Continental Union, and it was with no little surprise and disappointment that they beheld the Liberal premier, and a Frenchman at that, posing in London as the champion of British imperialism. This was not according to programme. One of the doctrines of the American gospel according to McKinley has been that the way to win Canada over to annexation is to render her condition as uncomfortable as possible. The late Mr. Dana was a great apostle to this creed. Make Canada feel the burden of her British connection and she will soon cast it off—this was one of Mr. Dana's pet delusions. There was nothing upon which there was greater unanimity of sentiment in the United States than upon the notion that if the favor of that country were withdrawn, Canada would be confronted with the alternative of annexation or bankruptcy. The unexpected happened. Canada extended her hand to the Great Mother, who grasped it heartily without even stopping to inquire what the new overture implied. British imperialism will like a great colossus bestride this continent. The northward extension of the United States must be considered as indefinitely postponed.

In this new condition of things it is not difficult to discover a motive for the sudden change of front on the part of the Washington Cabinet. If President McKinley can check the advance of British imperialism he will have accomplished what from the point of view of most United States public men will be regarded as a triumph. Therefore he has sought to win the Canadian Liberals back to their first love. Will he prove successful? Can he hope to induce Sir Wilfrid to turn his back upon Great Britain? Will he induce him to accept and grant such commercial favors that what there will be left to offer the mother country will be only a stone in the place of bread? If he can, imperialism will be dead, for sentiment alone can render it possible, and all sentiment would be killed by such a course.

So we think the Dominion stands in a very critical condition. The Greeks are at our gates bearing gifts. Shall we permit them to enter? The question calls for the exercise of all the ability, all the statesmanship, all the patriotism of Canadian public men. It rises above the mists of party politics. It is more than a Canadian question, for it touches the future of the whole Empire.

KOOTENAY TRANSPORTATION.

Both the federal and provincial governments ought to grapple in determined fashion with the transportation problem, so far as it affects the Kootenay. It is the question of the hour there. We do not agree with those who think the Canadian Pacific or any other company doing business in Canada deliberately sets itself to work to thwart the development of trade. Theoretically the interests of shippers and transportation companies are identical. It is the interest of the former to pay enough to enable the latter to give a good service; it is the interest of the latter to carry freight low enough to make it an object for the former to increase their shipments. Everyone admits these propositions; but unfortunately when it comes to applying them in practice any number of difficulties crop up. Hence there is everywhere more or less friction between the shippers and the transportation companies. The Kootenay papers discuss the question as though it were something peculiar to that part of the world; but they know that it is not and only treat it as if it were in their desire to be very emphatic.

There are some propositions in regard to the traffic of the Kootenay which seem self-evident. One of these is that the district is and must always to a large extent remain Canadian Pacific territory. Competition can come from two sources, although in any event it must be only partial. One of these is by connection with the railways of the United States, and the other is by an independent railway to the coast. This refers to traffic with outside places. A second, and some will say, an equally important question, is that of local traffic, whereby the produce of the mines can be got to the smelters. There is necessarily more or less connection between the two descriptions of traffic.

In any plan that may be adopted, the Canadian Pacific must be considered. It is well enough for irresponsible persons to talk as though this great corporation could be taken by the throat and compelled to do what anybody sees fit to require. A great transcontinental railway is as much an actual factor in determining competing means of transportation as a great mountain range would be. Suppose that the Victoria, Vancouver & Eastern company should be able to get their project financed, the country could have no possible guarantee that it would be an actual competitor with the C.P.R. We have lately seen how two such rival roads as the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific have become allies. No way can be suggested whereby men can be prevented from selling their stock in a railway. This is just as true of the Columbia & Western as of the other company. It is just as true of the Nelson & Fort Sheppard. For the present it suits the purposes of all these concerns to be in a sense rivals. Six months from now it may suit the interest of some or all of them to unite. If by subsidizing one concern in preference to any other the government could get some sort of a guarantee that continuous competition would be secured, thereby ensuring lower freight rates, the solution of the question would be easy enough. But can this be done? Can any surety be given that the C. P. R. will not acquire in some way the control of any new line that may be built? We ask this question because the cry of the Kootenay press is for relief from what they call an impending C. P. R. monopoly. If such a monopoly is impending, and if it is likely to be detrimental to the best interests of Kootenay, can any one suggest a certain method of warding it off? This question calls for more than mere general statements. Let it be conceded that competition in freight charges is necessary in the interest of the Kootenay mines. How can it be secured; not only for a few months, for there would be no object in spending money for that, but permanently? Can the V. V. & E. company guarantee it? Can the Columbia & Western do so? It may be said that the latter, by reason of its being operated in connection with a smelter, would be likely to remain independent, so far as local traffic is concerned. It will be contended that the former, by reason of its coast connection, could afford to remain an independent line. But we all know that, as a matter of practical business, railway companies are governed by what appear to be their interests from time to time, and that it is impossible to lay down in advance any general rules which they may be counted upon with certainty to follow.

It would be an easy matter for both governments to stand aloof and let the companies build what roads they choose, where they choose and when they choose, giving them no aid whatever from the public funds. But the people expect something else. They look to the governments for aid in the solution of the Kootenay transportation problem. We suggest that the two governments ought to act in harmony, and as they will find themselves unable to prevent the amalgamation of ostensibly competing lines, they should protect the public interest by coupling any aid which they may extend to any line with a stipulation as to the control of freight rates on ore and coke, if nothing else. If this is done, it will not matter very much who builds the needed railways in Kootenay.

THE GROUND FOR A SUBSIDY.

The News-Advertiser is opposed to provincial aid to a railway to the Yukon waters. There was a very comprehensive railway scheme, which, if we are not greatly in error, our contemporary would have been glad to support: but the combination could not be made, and since then it has been next to impossible to suggest a railway subsidy plan to which it has not been opposed. The Cassiar Central was a conspicuous exception to the rule. The object of the Cassiar Central is in some respects the same as the proposed line to Teslin Lake, namely, to develop a part of British Columbia and promote the exploration and opening up of the contiguous portion of the Northwest territory. The railway to Teslin Lake will have the additional recommendation of aiding British Columbia cities in competing for the trade of the Yukon valley. There is not an argument in favor of the Cassiar Central subsidy which does not apply to a subsidy for a line to Teslin Lake. We do not recall what the News-Advertiser said in favor of the latter, but we do know that Mr. Cotton spoke for the subsidy in the House and voted for it and against the party with which he was supposed to be in sympathy. It ought not to be difficult to convince a gentleman who favored the Cassiar Central subsidy, that a subsidy for a Stickeen-Teslin railway would be a good thing. He might raise a question as to the amount and nature of the aid to be given, but he could hardly justify the principle of the one and condemn the principle of the other.

Present indications are that Teslin lake is likely to become a mining centre of very considerable importance. There is gold on the Hootalinqua, and in some at least of the streams flowing into the lake. There is very promising ground between the lake and the Stickeen river. There is room for some colonization along the line which such a railway would follow. Therefore the same class of arguments can be used in favor of a subsidy to such a line as were successful in convincing Mr. Cotton that he ought to speak for and vote for the Cassiar Central subsidy.

The COLONIST will go as far as its contemporary in contending that the province ought not to incur any responsibility in order to promote the development of parts of Canada lying outside of the province unless some corresponding benefit would accrue to British Columbia; but the argument as stated by the News-Advertiser is a very narrow one. Given the existence of a region outside of British Columbia, the trade of which can under certain conditions be brought to British Columbia, it may be the duty of the British Columbia government to supply those conditions. The province ought not to feel itself hampered by the arbitrary lines which the parliament of Canada has laid down as the limits of this province. If there is a good thing beyond these lines, which may be got by reaching out for it, we favor attempting to reach it.

We stated yesterday the principle which ought to govern such a subsidy. We would not favor the general offer of a subsidy to this or any other railway; but believe that a specific project should be presented to the legislature, provided always that the Dominion shall not decide to construct the line as a public work. Such a project should be explicit as to immediate construction, and the company receiving aid should be bound to show its good faith and financial ability, not only before receiving a contract to build the road under the subsidy, but before receiving a charter from the legislature. A railway can be built from the Stickeen river to Teslin Lake next season. If this can be brought about by the granting of a reasonable subsidy from the province, we favor legislation to that effect, provided a company, having the money at its command, is prepared to enter into a contract to that effect with the government, subject to the approval of the legislature.

DOES IT SPEAK WITH AUTHORITY?

The Toronto Globe, discussing the great need of British Columbia for railways, says that the construction of the Canadian Pacific must be regarded as a full discharge of the responsibility of the Dominion to the Province in regard to railways, and informs us that the Crow's Nest Pass subsidy must not be considered as a precedent. Then follows this sentence: "Such aid was favored by the Globe as a condition of the abrogation of the Canadian Pacific's 10 per cent. clause." Since when did it come about that what the Globe says is the law of Canada? We fancy that when the question of aid to British Columbia railways comes before parliament other parties will be heard from besides the Globe. The Toronto paper says that in view of the fact that nothing can be expected from the Dominion, it might be well for this province to experiment on the subject of government construction of railways.

In view of this claim of the Globe, it may be interesting to give a few facts regarding the railway subsidies granted by the Dominion. Up to June 20, 1896, eighty-seven roads had been subsidized by cash bonuses. They embraced 5,716 miles of road, and the amount of subsidy that they had received or would become entitled to was $44,733,447, of which over $41,000,000 had been paid. Of this $26,500,000 in round numbers went to the Canadian Pacific, leaving a little over $18,000,000 for other lines. Of this amount $1,118,760 were given in aid of roads in British Columbia other than the Canadian Pacific. Last session certain new subsidies were voted, so that the total amount paid and available up to date may be stated in round numbers at $20,000,000, exclusive of the C.P.R. It is not fair to charge the whole of the amount paid to British Columbia railways to this province in estimating its claims against the Dominion, for the reason that in consideration of the grant of $750,000 to the E. & N. railway the province gave the Dominion 2,000,000 acres of land on the Island and 3,000,000 in the Peace River country. Taking this amount from the above sum charged against the province, and we have left $368,760 as the total contribution of the Dominion in aid of lines in British Columbia, or less than one-fiftieth part of the whole given for subsidies. We say that this is a fair way to put it, because neither of the other provinces gave anything to the Dominion in consideration of railway subsidies. Moreover, it is not fair to charge the province with the subsidy to the Canadian Pacific, first, for the reason that the construction of that line was a part of the terms of union, and second, because the province contributed an immense area in land to the Dominion government in return for its expenditure on that railway.

We say that under the aforegoing circumstances the claim of the Toronto Globe that this province need not expect any further aid from the Dominion in the matter of railway construction is unfair, and cannot be defended. One county in Quebec, Bonaventure, received nearly twice as much from the Dominion for aid to railways as the whole of this imperial province. The Drummond County railway, which the Globe is prepared to have the Dominion buy back from the company, received nearly as much as this whole province. Temiscouata county, Quebec, with a population of 22,000, who do not contribute an average of $1 per head to the revenue, received more than double as much in subsidies as this whole province. One railway in Ontario received as much as the whole province, and many railways nearly as much. And so the money went. When British Columbia wanted anything, she had to give up her public domain in exchange for subsidies, except in the three cases of the Nakusp & Slocan, the Columbia & Kootenay, and the Shuswap & Okanagan, which were tributaries of the Canadian Pacific.

We shall refer to this subject again.

THAT PRECIOUS PLATFORM.

The denunciatory part of the so-called Liberal platform is not worth two minutes' serious consideration. We will consider the affirmative part.

Government ownership of railways. The language of the platform is that the party advocates "the adoption of a policy directed towards the ultimate ownership of railways by the government." Sir James Carter, Chief Justice of New Brunswick, nearly a half century ago, speaking of a consolidation of the statutes, said it was a pity that the consolidators had not been bound up in the volume so that they could be referred to for an explanation of what they meant. So we say that the framers of this platform ought to have put themselves somewhere so that they could be catechised as to its meaning. What for example does the plank quoted mean? By what government is it contemplated that the railways shall ultimately be owned? Until some one, speaking with authority, explains this point, discussion is useless, for a different set of considerations arise if the Dominion government is meant from those that must be taken account of if the provincial government is to own the railways.

The reservation of public lands for actual settlement. This is absurd in a province like ours, where millions of acres will never be utilized for actual settlement, and yet can be used advantageously by private owners.

Government control of freight rates when subsidies are given. This does not go far enough. The government ought to take the right to supervise and control freight schedules on all railways; but whether this should be done by the local or federal government is an open question and the platform leaves it so, as far as the party for whom it speaks are concerned.

The investigation of land titles to see if the conditions in all cases have been complied with. Without evidence of specific instances where such an inquiry is desirable, the great expense of an investigation would not be authorized. With such evidence the legislature can order an investigation at any time. This plank is a mere demagogic bid for votes.

The simplification of land registry and transfer. This is not a party question. There is no difference of opinion as to the desirability of making land transfers simple; the only question is as to the expediency of going to the expense of any radical change.

Readjustment of representation according to population, with a larger representation for sparsely settled communities. The spirit of Sir Boyle Roche must have inspired the wording of this plank, which has the advantage of being a very decided bull and of meaning nothing. It is a good, safe plank. Anyone can say he is in favor of it. It binds no one to anything to be done at any particular time or in any particular way.

The abolition of the $200 deposit. There are arguments on both sides of this proposition. The deposit probably does very little good. It is a matter of no great importance.

The repeal of the mortgage tax. There is no mortgage tax to be repealed. Why did not the platform builders say what they meant, namely, the repeal of the personal property tax? The explanation is that to do so would be to give the whole game away. They dare not advocate the removal of taxes from personal property and putting it on real estate. Why have they not honestly said what they mean, which is that money loaned on mortgage shall not be taxed, while money invested in anything else shall be? Why have they not told the men whose property is taxed that what they propose to take off the mortgage they must levy directly upon the land?

The repeal of the miner's license so far as relates to those working in mines. The proposition is a reasonable one, but is neither new, nor specially the property of the Liberals.

The imposition of a tax on the output of coal mines. This is an indefensible proposition, which needs only to be understood to be rejected.

The disposal of timber limits by public auction in such quantities as will meet the requirements of trade. The latter part of this plank is unworkable. The desirability of disposing of the public domain by auction is a very debateable subject. We admit that some things can be said in favor of it. It is also open to abuse. We should like to hear what the advocates of this change claim for it.

Government scaling of logs. We were under the impression that the lumber interest was properly safeguarded in this respect.

The inauguration of a system of forestry. The suggestion, for it can be called little else, is a good one; but it is not new and a beginning has already been made.

The discouragement of Oriental labor immigration. The only thing to be said about this is that the Liberal party is very absurd if it claims to be the special custodian of this sentiment.

To these definite planks there follow three vague ones, which look like a belated section of the denunciatory clause with which the platform opens. They are trumpery in the extreme.

The whole platform is not worth the fuss and mystery that has been made over it. It is trivial throughout, a sort of Cheap-John, catch-penny affair. In no place does it rise above the level of demagogic mediocrity. Its tone is pharisaical throughout. It is a curious medley of platitudes and puerile abuse.

THE egg has been hatched. The self-styled Liberals of British Columbia now know what they are supposed to think. The platform adopted at New Westminster has been given to the world. As the platform of one of the parties in Dominion politics it is a curiosity. There is not a word on Dominion politics in it. There is nothing especially new in it; but we will reserve comment upon the whole product until another day.

THERE are many indications that great improvement has already begun in the condition of Seattle. Although no town on the Coast is so much our rival at the present time as Seattle, every one in Victoria will be glad to know that the Queen City of the Sound is rapidly mounting the grade towards prosperity.

FOR three nights in succession the Times has referred to asses. We would remind our contemporary that nothing is so objectionable in a paper as egotism.

THE San Francisco agent of the North German Lloyds Steamship Co. stated in Seattle that his company has thousands of people booked from Germany for the Golden North. One steamer load will come direct around the Horn, but the others will take the Atlantic liners to New York. Things look now as if we could not estimate the immensity of the rush soon to begin.

IT is not often that London has a very serious fire. The imagination shrinks from contemplating what would be the result if the great city should be overwhelmed by a conflagration.

THE CANADIAN PRESS.

THE DEADLY BIKE.

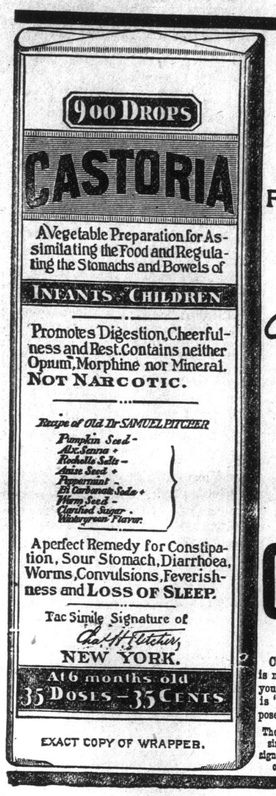
A Toronto exchange insists that the crime of murder "runs in cycles." But there are some people in Toronto who thinks murder runs on bicycles.—Hamilton Spectator.

IN THE INTERIOR.

The rich gold deposits on the headwaters of the northern streams flowing eastward from the mountains, many of them as rich as the affluents of the Yukon, will also be developed. Attention will also be directed to the petroleum and other valuable mineral deposits known to exist north of Edmonton.—The Nor'-Wester.

THE BOWERY STYLE.

As everybody knows the term of office of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor is nearing its close; a few days now will see him bidding farewell to Carey Castle, the occupancy of which has been extremely creditable to himself and his accomplished wife. During their official residence at the Capital they have dispensed their hospitality lavishly and have endeared themselves to all who shared in their entertainments, and these were not confined to a favored few but represented all classes of society. In his position as Lieut.-Governor, the Hon. Mr. Dewdney has observed the best traditions of representative government and has in no way sought to interfere unduly with the counsels of his advisers or to infringe upon the rights of their opponents. He leaves office with an unsullied character and a high reputation for business methods and progressive ideas. He has placed his money in the mines of the interior, though we have not heard of any large dividends coming his way. Under such circumstances for the Victoria Times to single him for attack is simply disgraceful, and evidences the low methods which it thinks desirable to pursue. While Mr. Dewdney is endeavoring to assist in opening up the mineral wealth of the province, his detractors on the Times, who have never been known for their enterprise in this direction, sling mud with a proficiency born of large experience and narrow intellect. The spectacle is not an edifying one, and is repulsive to those whose range of vision soars above the guttersnipe and the vulture. When these have been long forgotten the Hon. Edgar Dewdney will be remembered with affection by the people of British Columbia.—Vancouver World.



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BY WAY OF VARIETY.

He—There's no use crying over spilt milk.

She—Of course not. There's plenty more to spill.—Brooklyn Life.

"Aren't you taking Mr. Harvard at a disadvantage by asking him to stay to dinner in his business clothes?"

"No, auntie. Jack is one of the most extemporaneous diners I ever knew."—Judge.

"I suppose classical music is all right in its place," said Maud.

"I'm sure it is," replied Mamie.

"I don't care to listen to it myself, but sometimes you have to play it in order to get a man to go home."—Washington Star.

The Wife—The baby has been jabbering away there for about an hour, and I can't understand a thing she says.

The Husband—I've noticed, dear, the little thing grows more like you every day.—Yonkers Statesman.

Cause of the Quarrel—She—So many men marry for money—you wouldn't marry me for money, would you, dearest?

He (absently)—No, darling. I wouldn't marry you for all the money in the world.

And he marvels now that she did not speak the last time he met her.

"Do you like the hat?" as she turned it slowly on the pink tips of her fingers.

"More than I can tell, but I love its darling little owner."

"How sweet! It belongs to sister. I'll call her."—Detroit Free Press.

"Did you see that a young couple are to be married in a wild beast cage?"

"Poor man! He'll know he's caged to start with."

"Poor woman! Tamely permitting herself to be linked with a brute."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Miss Knowall—Mr. Musick's voice sounds like it had been cultivated, doesn't it, professor?

Professor—Yes. Plowed, for instance.

Lady artist—Do you belong to that ship over there?

Yes—Miss.

Lady artist—Then would you mind loosening all those ropes? They are much too tight, and, besides, I can't draw straight lines.

Col. Georgia—Ephraim, there were six fat chickens in my coop last night, and only one was there this morning. What have you to say to that?

Ephraim—Nuffin', boss, 'ceppin' som e nigger's mighty keerless.