

The Colonist.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1903.

PUBLISHED BY
The Colonist Printing & Publishing
Company, Limited Liability.
No. 27 Broad Street, Victoria, B. C.
A. G. SARGISON, Managing Director.

THE DAILY COLONIST

Delivered by carrier at 20 cents per week,
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Three months 1.25

SEMI-WEEKLY COLONIST

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SENSATIONAL MISREPRESENTATION.

The sensational article on the Assessment Act in the Times of this morning is presumably the result of the combined efforts of the Victoria Board of Trade and that journal. Such united effort has, in this particular instance, been used to display considerable ignorance of the subject they attempt to criticize.

We are sorry, in particular that the Victoria Board of Trade has assumed the paternity of the schedule prepared by one of its members without first verifying its assertions. This schedule was, however, circulated with all its errors amongst the members of His Majesty's loyal Opposition during the progress of the bill in order to defeat, if possible, its passage.

We do not wish to say that the members of the schedule intentionally tried to mislead the public, but he has not correctly studied either the old acts or the new. He has not attempted to verify his figures, relating to the taxes payable under the former acts just repeated. His illustrations from the acts are accordingly absolutely erroneous and, therefore, his comparisons are not merely misleading, but worthless. If he had taken the slightest trouble to acquaint himself with the laws under which business men have been paying taxes for years, the author of the document would have been the last man to promulgate such a farrago of misstatement.

For the purpose of enlightening the general public, we will state the law as to the taxation of personal property and income in this Province as it existed up to the time when the new act came into force, on the 11th instant. All personal property and income were liable to taxation, subject to certain exemptions. The exemptions were: (1) Income of every person up to \$1,000; (2) the income of a farmer derived from his farm and the income of merchants, mechanics or other persons derived from capital liable to assessment; (3) so much of the personal property of any person as was equal to the just debts owing by him on account of the purchase price of said personal property to the vendor of said personal property; (4) the net personal property of any person up to \$300; (5) household effects of whatever kind, books and wearing apparel.

Section 6 B of chapter 56, section 7 of the statutes of 1901, explains the method of arriving at the taxable property or income, where the income is derived from personal property, the Province taking whichever tax should be the greater.

Before showing the errors made in the famous schedule, it is also necessary to state that the former Assessment Act described as personal estate, Section 2 of chapter 24 of the Amending Act of 1903, which was in force in May last, defines personal property as including all goods, chattels, wares, merchandise, effects, stocks, bonds, debentures, securities, investments (except mortgages and municipal and Provincial debentures, etc.), accounts, notes, certificates of deposit, judgments, claims in action, franchises, moneys, debts, etc.

The first illustration in the schedule printed in the Times is as follows: A merchant with a capital of \$75,000 carrying a stock of \$150,000, and book debts amounting to \$150,000, would on his stock \$75,000, for which he pays 6 per cent. interest. Now, under the old act, this merchant should have been taxed on all of his personal property, subject to the exemptions within the act. If the \$75,000 due on stock was NOT due to the original vendor, then it should not have been exempted. If he borrowed the \$75,000 from the bank or someone else to pay off the original vendor, it should not have been exempted. In this case the assessable property would be: Stock, \$150,000; book debts, \$150,000, together \$300,000, or at one-half of one per cent., \$1,500 or tax instead of \$375, as stated in the Times. Assuming, however, that he was entitled to the exemption, the debt being due to the original vendor, then that would still leave his assessable personal property at \$225,000, yielding a tax of \$1,125 instead of \$375. A still further curious thing about this first illustration in the Times is: Is the \$75,000 capital absorbed in the stock and book debts, or is the capital existing in some other form. No sane merchant could

carry on business with a stock of \$250,000 and book debts of \$150,000—and if the capital (which is also personal property) existed in addition to the stock in trade and book debts, then he ought to have paid taxes on \$375,000, or \$1,875 instead of the \$375, of the Times' allusion.

The other illustrations of our contemporary, being based upon wrong foundations, it is unnecessary to expose their errors and the fallacious reasoning which runs through the schedule and the Times' article.

If any person will, however, take the trouble to make up a statement of the assets and liabilities of the merchant referred to in the illustrations given in the schedule, he will find that the taxable property in each case is quite different from what the schedule tries to bring out. Upon the assumption, however, that the lowest tax payable by the merchant on personal property was \$1,125, a person who owned real estate to the same value (\$225,000) would have paid, under the old acts, \$1,350, and under the new act this inequality is increased, as both merchant and real estate owner pay an equal tax on equal investments. Thus, on \$225,000 personal property the tax is (less discount) \$2,025, and on \$225,000 of real estate the tax is \$2,025.

The real cause for this calamity howling is the fact that some taxpayers, under the old acts, paid too little, some not even what they should have done legally, and now that no discrimination is made between owners of real estate and owners of personal property, some few, active, persons among the latter are resorting to tactics which are not patriotic, but inimical to the best interests of the Province.

The increase in taxation now imposed should not be unduly burdensome to any person or class of persons in the Province, and although the increase is imposed on personal than on real property, that arises from the fact that they were unequal before, but are now made equal.

No taxation act ever devised in any part of the civilized world has been faultless, perfect equality in taxation is, humanly speaking, impossible, and it is not claimed that the present act is perfect. Under the incidence of taxation is nearer equality than under any former act of this Province.

The Times and the Victoria Board of Trade ought to be sure of their facts before attempting this to criticize, and we are quite sure that they will, on calm reconsideration, regret having published abroad such doleful blue rain complaints, injurious to the Province and everyone in it.

IMPERIAL PREFERENCE GAINS GROUND.

The fact that the Unionist candidates, Dr. Rutherford Harris, of South African fame, and Major Coates, a financier well known to Canadian public men, won on Mr. Chamberlain's policy by defeating the contested English free-trade candidates at Dulwich and Lewisham, respectively, is of happy omen for the cause of Imperial preference. In each case the successful candidate, whilst pledging general support to Mr. Balfour and the British Government, went beyond their policy of free trade, and boldly declared for Mr. Chamberlain's far-reaching proposal.

This thus no doubt affrighted many Unionists of the old school, who remain devoted to the traditional free trade or, rather, limited free import policy of Great Britain, and thus lost some votes.

The successful candidates also had raised against them all with vigor, the "food and small loaf" cry of the Little Englanders, who they had no right to fear. The well-known fact that in the United Kingdom, where Government patronage and influence are usually very small in any other than a dockyard arsenal or similar constituency, by electioneering to the cause of free trade in this country, tend to go against the Government of the time. The local man with a political grievance has then a grand opportunity to assert himself, whilst the Opposition has an enormous power—as it is now—of making its policy at a general election, of making its forces for the capture of a special constituency.

In view of these circumstances, and the fact also that some of the present British Government's administration work has undoubtedly been open to effective criticism—though a general improvement is progressing in this respect—both the Imperialist Unionists retained the threatened seats for their party by making the large enough to show that these should be perfectly safe in the event of Liberal attack at the next general election.

The result has naturally brought to Mr. Chamberlain the keenest gratification, and he has accordingly been very much encouraged by the reactionaries, who still advocate for the country the continuance of a "laissez faire" fiscal policy, which has of late years most assuredly done great damage to the British Empire. In this respect, as on the British trade in general, its effects on home agriculture have, in many British counties, been simply deplorable.

VICTORIA'S HOME DEFENSIVE FORCE.

It is regrettable that Lord Donaldson, as general officer in command of the Canadian militia, has been compelled to note that our local regiment is still about eighty men short of its full strength, more especially as that total is not large, whilst Esquimalt is one of the most important defensive points of the Empire.

The patriotism of our younger men ought surely to be able to remedy this default and maintain without difficulty a local regiment of two hundred and eighty officers and men, whilst, apart from the higher motive of patriotic endeavor there should be for many men much attraction in the physical training which now accompanies enlistment. For this is no longer a matter of mere drilling, marching and work with the gun, but is accompanied by many exercises of a recreative type.

What should make such recruiting easier, as it does in the Mother Country and in some other parts of Canada, would be the formation of a cadet battalion, as suggested by the General, large numbers of whose members would, on attaining manhood, naturally pass for a period into the ranks of our local regiment. We do not, of course, have regard to local circumstances, that so

large a cadet battalion, as one of 1,000 youths could be enlisted, but it certainly should be possible to raise one five hundred strong, who would be available for service in training and disciplining our boys, and as we have said, should solve the problem of keeping the local regiment at its full strength.

The case of more than one of the smaller incorporated towns of South Kootenay suggests what need there is for simplification of the administrative machinery of places that are only fairly sized, not cities in any real sense. There is urgently needed, under a revised municipal code, a division of town municipalities into two classes, the one of higher grade by reason of larger population, ratable resources and bloodstock of resources, and the rights now accorded to cities, whilst urban communities of the other class—small towns—ought to be provided with less elaborate and costly administrative machinery and smaller councils. The Shuswap City, and other towns of small towns of South Kootenay, it is now said to be very doubtful if a sufficient number of duly qualified candidates can be obtained to constitute a full council. Few residents can qualify, and fewer still, seemingly, desire so to do.

L'appetit vient en mangant says a well-known French proverb, and certainly the desire for territorial expansion with great nations that are world powers, seems to grow with each successful experiment. So now Senator Heyburn, of Idaho, is, after the United States have practically annexed Puerto Rico, and the United States Senate a joint resolution calling upon the President to annex the grossly misgoverned negro-republics of Hayti and San Domingo, in each of which American commercial interests are of importance. The Senator will probably receive considerable support for his resolution, though it is unlikely that it will pass. This, however, is really almost a superfluous, as should act occasion offer and the seizure be deemed advisable, it will be easy enough for the United States to protect American commercial interests by action practically equivalent to annexation. As, however, such action would further aggravate the race issue in the neighbor republic by adding a large loss of white citizens of subjects in this case grossly ignorant, it is unlikely to be taken without very careful consideration. Meanwhile the Haytiens and Dominicans will find it imperative upon themselves, unless they are to make political enemies of the United States, to make good their word, to the West Indian negroes of the Island of Hayti have greatly degenerated since they acquired the power of self-government, having lapsed into Vodooism and other revolting pagan practices.

LARGER HOPES OF PEACE IN THE ORIENT.

The changes in the Russo-Japanese situation have been many and kaleidoscopic, but there really seems now to be a larger hope of a peaceful issue, as a result of international compromise. This is in fact due to a London despatch, the view taken as a result of a recent Russian note of reply to Japan, by Baron de Giers, the Russian ambassador to Great Britain. Meanwhile to facilitate what it is hoped may be final peace negotiations, the subject, Russia has officially declared, in order to soothe the naturally ruffled feelings of the Japanese, that the recent visit of Muscovite warships to Chemulpo, Korea, was in the main of a purely commercial nature, and that the visit was not intended to assure it will doubtless be politic under the circumstances for Japan to accept.

The main factors that should and almost certainly are making for peace are: (1) the Russo-Japanese situation; (2) the Russo-Japanese situation; (3) the Russo-Japanese situation; (4) the Russo-Japanese situation; (5) the Russo-Japanese situation; (6) the Russo-Japanese situation; (7) the Russo-Japanese situation; (8) the Russo-Japanese situation; (9) the Russo-Japanese situation; (10) the Russo-Japanese situation; (11) the Russo-Japanese situation; (12) the Russo-Japanese situation; (13) the Russo-Japanese situation; (14) the Russo-Japanese situation; (15) the Russo-Japanese situation; (16) the Russo-Japanese situation; (17) the Russo-Japanese situation; (18) the Russo-Japanese situation; (19) the Russo-Japanese situation; (20) the Russo-Japanese situation; (21) the Russo-Japanese situation; (22) the Russo-Japanese situation; (23) the Russo-Japanese situation; (24) the Russo-Japanese situation; (25) the Russo-Japanese situation; (26) the Russo-Japanese situation; (27) the Russo-Japanese situation; 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