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VICTORIA, TUESDAY, JUNE 19, 1901.

THE LATE CHIEF JUSTICE.

As announced in our last issue, the Chief Justice of British Columbia, Sir Matthew Baillie Begbie, has paid his last account to nature, receiving the highest honors which his fellow citizens could pay to him in the shape of a public funeral. Sir Matthew was, in many respects, a remarkable man, possessed of those stern and unflinching qualities so essential to the establishment and maintenance of law and order in a new community, which at its beginning, no matter how high may be the qualities of many of those who compose it, it finds always within its elements that unless firmly repressed cannot fail to be other than disturbing factors. Stern and overbearing the late Judge may have been; but he was eminently the man for the situation in the early days, and, if later, the exhibition of those qualities may have been somewhat out of place, it was not to be wondered that occasionally their later exhibition should have been the subject of unfavorable comment. He was, however, eminently the man whom the occasion required, and no better proof of this could be offered than the continued existence of good order in a scattered province peopled by individuals of such diverse and divergent qualities and antecedents. The late Judge was well worthy of every honor of which he was the object whether as the living administrator or the lifeless remains of a great and useful man. It is to be hoped that in the choice of a successor the Dominion Government will remember that the only man who can worthily wear the ermine which was put off at even a higher call than that of duty, must be one who is not only a sound jurist, but who will not have long to serve before he fully understands the conditions of the immense tract of country for which it will be his mission to dispense law and equity alike.

THE AUSTRALIAN DELEGATES.

We wish that the Australian Delegates to the coming Intercolonial Conference on the 26th inst. had made up their minds to remain in Victoria longer than the three hours which they considered or

were made to believe was all that they could afford to give to the capital of the Province of British Columbia. It cannot be gainsayed that Victoria is the leading port of the Province and that her commercial interests are the largest and most widely extended on the British Pacific coast. Nevertheless the gentlemen who have been brought seven thousand miles to intelligently discuss trade relations with Canada occupied less than three hours in talking to our merchants and at the same time making the rounds of the city and its suburbs, and that at nightfall.

No man better than the deputation of the British Columbia Board of Trade who tendered Victoria's hospitalities to the visitors could explain the commercial situation of the British Pacific coast or describe the resources of the immense tract of land this side the Rocky Mountains, yet they found it impossible to remain here as much as twenty-four hours, while as they must have been aware, and, as they have since discovered, several days must elapse before they could proceed on their journey eastward. As we have several times stated previously, we are glad that delegates were commissioned to come to Canada on a special business mission; but they have, we think unfortunately, ignored one of the most important centres of operation. No doubt they meant well; but what was it possible for them to learn by the exchange of half a dozen hurried speeches and a gallop through the streets of the city?

THE BLACK DEATH.

According to the latest reports from the Orient, an epidemic which is believed to be identical with that which ravaged the city of London in 1665 is now raging in Canton and Hong Kong. We cannot well afford to have it here; but if we are to keep clear of it, we must adopt all the necessary precautions. Like smallpox and cholera, it has its habitat in filth and squalor, though when it once presents itself it is not slow to take hold of those whose constitutions or conditions are such as to predispose them to take any infectious or contagious disease. We are all of us aware what smallpox has done in well regulated communities when once it was imported into them. The moral of all this is "clean up." There is said to be a skeleton in every closet and there are few houses in or about which there is not something that has a decided tendency to encourage disease. The health inspectors, acting under the directions of the able and energetic medical health officer, Dr. George Duncan, are certain to double their vigilance—if that be possible—in the way of purging

and purifying the city; while householders themselves ought not to need any urging in this direction. Every house should be set in thorough order and every individual should consider it to be his duty to himself and to his neighbors to keep himself in that physical condition which should prevent the existence in or about him of any predisposing causes.

Moreover, we have urged so persistently that the suggestion has become almost gray-bearded, that the quarantine regulations be far more vigorously carried out than they have been, and we do so again. Neither the Empresses nor any other vessels should have a mere formal and perfunctory inspection by the quarantine officer. They ought to be thoroughly overhauled no matter at what cost of time, and without considering who are the owners or consignees. We repeat, let there be no mistake or neglect on this score. If there is, the people will hold the guilty parties to account, and some day there will be a terrible reckoning. In view of past experiences, we do not wonder the disfavor in which the Chinese and Japanese are held by many people; but we think that the quarantine system and its administration is much more to blame than they are for the sad experiences which we have had.

FLOOD PRECAUTIONS.

We think that Premier Davie and his colleagues are entitled to every consideration for the prompt manner in which they have met the requirements of the situation in connection with the Fraser Valley floods. The leader of the Government himself was actively engaged in the work of affording assistance and relief while the Provincial Secretary, Colonel Baker, visited the scene and worked like a Trojan, sparing neither labor nor expense so as to render effective service. What, however, has now to be seen to is the proper repairing of the dykes, which is a public work of the greatest importance. They have been shown to be utterly inadequate to meet the objects for which they were constructed and now is the time for the Dominion and Provincial Governments to cooperate in this undertaking of prime necessity. The work should be of the most thorough and substantial nature. Floods have been of occasional occurrence in the past; we fully realize the fact that under existing conditions they are certain to repeat their work of destruction in the future. We have some idea of what there is to be expected; let us not attempt to disguise the fact that something is imperatively necessary. We have no doubt that the Dominion Government will understand its obligations if they are properly represented and will not hesitate to do its share of what the situation demands.