The Colonist.

THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 1898.

IMPORTANT.

News comes from Lynn Canal that steps are being taken to get two lines of railway started immediately from the Coast to the Yukon. If these efforts succeed we may bid farewell to a road from a British Columbia port. Everything depends upon the action of the British Columbia legislature. If a contract is made at once for a line from the Coast to Teslin lake the other projects will fail to receive support from the Dominion government; but if there is much more delay they will get the start and it will then be everlastingly too late for this province to secure the northern trade. A golden opportunity is at hand. It ought not to pass unimproved.

FARMERS' BANKS.

The Montreal Gazette deals very sarcastically with the "cheap money" bill introduced into the provincial legislature by the government, but succeeds in showing either that it is very imperfectly informed as to the principles of the measure, or inexcusably ignorant of a system of finance, well known and successfully employed on the Continent of Europe. The synopsis of the bill telegraphed East would give a very inadequate idea of its full scope, but a paper claiming a standing as a financial journal, is scarcely excusable in calling it "an original way of getting credit," because the principles underlying the agricultural credit associations and the agricultural and village banks of Europe, which as a means of getting credit without any government guarantee, have been phenomenally successful. When, therefore, associations have the credit of the government at their back, "the experience of the association bond sellers" with the first business man they approach to borrow money "might be worth chronicling as a lesson in finance," as the Gazette observes, and one which in all probability it might be desirable that the Gazette should learn. There appear to be things in the philosophy of finance that the Gazette has never heard of, but they exist in the broad light of day, just the same, and our contemporary, if it keeps its eyes open, will have an opportunity of observing them at closer range than Europe.

The Gazette makes the singular error of supposing that a bill of this nature, pledging the credit of the government, could be introduced by a private member, a strange blunder for so well-informed a journal to make. But if we admit that our contemporary's ignorance on this point is excusable, what shall we say of a paper that attempts to speak authoritatively on finance and yet apparently is utterly in the dark about such developments in credit systems as the "Schulze-Delitzct" and "Raiffeisein" systems of Germany or the "Banche Populari" or "Casse Rurali" of Italy. Our contemporary is apparently unaware of the extension of these systems to France and Switzerland or of the establishment of agricultural and village banks in Great Britain. These are for the most part commercial enterprises without government guarantee, but the principle of them all is co-operative credit. Government guarantee is needed here to secure a low rate of interest. In some instances in Europe private guarantors lend their credit to help the poorer associations. It may interest the Gazette to know that under the Schulze-Delitzct system, which started in 1850 with a membership of 396 and loans of £1,320 there were £23,000,000 loaned out in 1895, with a reserve fund of £2,000,000. The Raiffeisein system, made up of members of small individual assets, had in 1893 £1,000,000 and upwards out on loan and reserve funds and deposits of £1,750,000.

THE SENATE.

In an article on the Senate, the Toronto Globe elaborates at very considerable length a point made by the Colonist a few days ago, namely, that while every one admits the Upper Chamber in the Dominion parliament to be unsuited to the requirements of the country, no one has ever suggested a feasible plan of reform. From this the Globe argues that the Senate ought to be abolished. Substantially its position is that a body that is indefensible as constituted and cannot be improved, ought to be got rid of. Are the people of Canada prepared for this? The question cannot be answered off-hand. The latent conservatism of the country must be taken into account, and it would naturally be against a change. Of course we do not use the word conservatism in a political sense. So far as the Conservative party is concerned, there is probably just as uncomplimentary an opinion as to the value of the Senate as among the Liberals, although there is not quite so strong a feeling on the subject. Common sense teaches that if, in the process of time the Senate should become as strongly Liberal as it is now Conservative, the Conservative party would probably have occasion to feel as bitterly towards it as the Liberals do. As a party hoping to gain control of the Dominion at a future day, the Conservatives cannot afford to regard great issues from the standpoint of temporary success. They must deal with them upon their merits. The question involved in the retention of the Senate as at present constituted may be broadly stated thus:

Is it in the interest of Canada that one of the parliamentary chambers shall have a political complexion and not be amenable to the popular vote?

We think that ninety-nine out of a hundred voters will answer this question in the negative. At present the Senate is largely Conservative. It is Conservative because most of its members were appointed by a Conservative ministry and did not leave their partizanship outside of the Senate chamber. If the Liberals remain in power during this and the next parliament, the Senate is likely to become Liberal for the same reason. But the actual political complexion of the chamber is immaterial. The evil lies in the fact that it is a body amenable to the control of a party leader and irresponsible to the people. In the first years of Confederation, the Senators represented the provinces; now they represent the party to which they owe their appointment.

Yet, as we have already said, these considerations do not settle the matter. It is one thing to answer the above question and quite another to say what ought to be done in view of that negative answer. Are all those, who are prepared to say that the Senate is not properly constituted, prepared to vote for its abolition? This leads us to consider if the interests of the Dominion would be safe if parliament consisted of only a single elective chamber.

History throws some light on this point, that is not the history of other countries, but of our own. We agree with the Globe that there is not much use in going to other nations for arguments on this point, and we remind our contemporary that we do not need to look far afield for illustrations. Ever since confederation Ontario has been governed by a single chamber and so have Manitoba and British Columbia ever since their admission to the Union. New Brunswick has had seven years' experience of the single-chamber system. In none of these provinces has the suggestion been made to establish a second chamber. Hence we may conclude that so far as the provinces are concerned, single legislative chambers are quite sufficient for all purposes.

We have had nearly thirty-one years' experience of confederation. Out of this period the Conservatives were in power twentythree years. We recall only two cases in which the Senate ever threw out legislation introduced in the House of Commons by the Conservative ministry, or altered or amended it in any radical way. The paucity of such cases warrant the statement that under Conservative rule, Canada has had substantially only one legislative chamber. Some may say that this absence of Senatorial interference with government measures is due to the general excellence of the Conservative policy; but such an argument will have no weight with sensible men. We think it may be said with perfect truth that during the whole of the period of Confederation until 1897, the Senate has given very little evidence that its existence was a safeguard to provincial rights, which was the original reason given for its creation, or a protection against hasty legislation, which has been the excuse for its continuance. We do not think that, if we were framing the scheme of Confederation anew, and had the experience of the last thirty years as a guide, any one would think it necessary to create such a chamber as the Senate.

One effect of the war will be to send a great deal of the business of the United States to Canadian ports, and this will be a very decided advantage to our transportation lines and to those who handle cargoes. Nevertheless the business interests of Canada are so interwoven with those of her neighbor, that the loss which will result from interruptions to business projects will more than offset the gain, if hostilities are of long duration. As a matter of fact, war is a bad thing from any point of view, and it is never of more than temporary advantage even to those who make money out of it. The industries it developes are never a healthy growth.

The New Westminster Sun urges the establishment of the sugar beet industry in the lower Fraser valley. It is too late to do anything much in the matter this year, but we suggest that the farmers of the district should cultivate sufficient of the beets this year to enable a thorough test of their saccharine qualities to be made, and to give an adequate basis for a complete investigation of the subject. If the result is satisfactory, as we are sure it will be, an application to parliament next year for a bonus would be in order.

The Times is quite incorrect. The Colonist has on no occasion, save one, referred to its editor, and for that single reference it promptly apologized. The Colonist challenges any one to cite from its columns any other reference than that just mentioned, to the editor of any contemporary paper except in the way of a kindly notice. Of course this remark does not apply to criticisms upon the political course of Mr. F. C. Cotton, M.P.P., who is editor of the News-Advertiser, but as a prominent member of the house may properly be criticized.

English-speaking people the world over are great sticklers for a secret ballot: but it is not certain that much claimed on behalf of such a system is not without warrant. An open poll, where men had to go up and cast their vote in the sight of their neighbors, would have some very great advantages. But the matter has only an academic interest. This generation will not see a return to the system of open voting.

It appears that a representative of the Cuban Junta, which claims to be a part of the government of the unhappy island, recently offered a friend of President McKinley several million dollars of Cuban bonds at one cent on the dollar, if he would agree to recognize them officially. Of course the offer was spurned; but what shall be said of men who would make it?

A provincial paper speaks of Sir Charles Tupper as "a healthy imitation of a man." This habit of referring disrespectfully to public men very greatly mars the press of British Columbia. It is very greatly to be regretted. Those who employ it are rarely or never men who would have the courage to express themselves on any subject in the presence of the people whom they thus assail. Let us have an end to this sort of thing. An honorable profession is disgraced by low personalities and surely newspaper work ought to be an honorable profession, if any such thing is possible. Do these men, who use the opportunity afforded them by the control of newspaper columns to say mean, bitter and insulting things, ever reflect upon how they are abusing a great privilege? There is not in all the range of human activity a position which gives a man greater opportunity for doing good and evil than that of a newspaper editor. Day after day he speaks to a large circle of readers. Day after day what he says goes into the homes and families round about him. Surely he ought to learn better how to use this great opportunity than to employ it in reviling those who, like himself, are engaged in newspaper work, or who occupy public positions. We do not say that men ought not to write with vigor and spirit. We do not say that they should fear to expose wrong doing. But we take the position that the habit of assailing men with insulting epithets and gross personalities is an outrage upon newspaper readers and a shameful prostitution of an invaluable privilege.

The New Denver Ledge attacks Vancouver and Victoria business men for their alleged indifference to the commercial wants of Kootenay. We do not think the attack at all warranted. The business men of Victoria are, we know, very desirous of promoting the most intimate business relations with the Interior. If just at present their attention is being directed chiefly to the North, it is because a great deal of work has to be done to secure the trade of that rich section. We fear our Kootenay friends are apt to get a little unreasonable at times and to insist on more than their share of attention. Did the Ledge ever hear this story? George had been kissing his best girl for an indefinite period, when he paused for breath. She said "I fear you have ceased to love me," and George replied: "No, I haven't, but I must breathe." We would remind our Kootenay friends that the Coast city can hardly keep up demonstrating their esteem all the time, and that as a matter of fact it is fair that Kootenay should do some of the kissing.

The Columbian thinks the Edmonton route to the Yukon a "bugaboo." We would be sorry to be unable to take that view of the case if we did not feel confident that, notwithstanding the opposition of the Columbian, the legislature will not be prorogued without securing the construction of a railway from the Coast to the Yukon. When we get that the Edmonton route may be opened as soon as any one pleases and British Columbia can hold its own. We do not understand the Columbian's opposition. It draws its support from a section of the province which will be immediately benefitted by the proposed road and will lose an enormous prospective trade if the forthcoming railway to the Yukon is built either from Edmonton or from the head of the Lynn Canal.

Every one admits the desirability of settling the Songhees reserve matter without delay, but it is not so pressing that the convenience of the city members could not have been consulted at the outset. The questions involved are hardly of a partizan nature, and it is to be hoped will be considered in no partizan spirit. They have been dealt with by so many people, most of whom had no very clear conception of what their nature, was, that they have been sadly muddled. As Beaconsfield said of the Eastern question: There was once a man who said he understood it, but he is dead. This case may not be quite as bad as that, but it is far too much mixed up to be disposed of with a nicely phrased sentence or two.

The redistribution bill had a very easy time of it in the house. The best speeches were by Hon. Mr. Eberts and Hon. Mr. Pooley on the government side and Mr. Semlin on the opposition. In order that the debate might not be prolonged over until another day the Premier refrained from speaking. For some reason best known to himself Mr. Cotton did not speak. Possibly he did not like to express his views about those whom he calls "Victoria Hoodlums," except at long range.

The Hartland, N.B., Advertiser tells of a man who took $2.00 sixteen years ago for voting at a Dominion election and lately sent $5.00 to the man from whom he received it, with instructions to send it to whom it belonged or "his heirs." It appears that he not only took the money, but voted for the other candidate just the same.

Mr. Bostock told the railway committee at Ottawa that the British Columbia government no longer represented public opinion in this province. Mr. Bostock has a few things to learn. He will be enlightened on this point by the next election.

We notice several editorials in Eastern exchanges on the fact that Hon. Clifford Sifton is learning to dance. What is that quotation about "happy is the country whose annals are"—well very commonplace?

The Rossland Times is alive to the necessity for a railway to the Yukon which will enable the Coast cities of Victoria and Vancouver to compete with their United States rivals.

We do not think the Vernon News will suffer in public esteem for its frank expression of its views on the redistribution bill. The News is friendly to the government, but does not think the measure referred to does justice to East Yale. We believe experience will show our contemporary that the new arrangement is about as equitable as any that could be suggested. Such matters must be approached in a spirit of compromise.

Recent despatches convey the impression that Spain is wholly dependent upon foreign nations for her supply of coal. This is not the case, for in at least four of the provinces of the kingdom there are extensive coal deposits of excellent quality. The mines are worked in a very inferior way, and consequently the supply is short of what it ought to be. Spain imports about $4,000,000 of coal from Great Britain every year. Where she is short is in supplies of coal accessible to her ships abroad.

The Slocan City News doubts if there ever was in the British Columbia legislature "a more puerile opposition than at the present time." Mr. Semlin and his friends are certainly open to this criticism, for their course during the present session has been singularly barren of all result, except to show how incapable they are to fill the ministerial position to which they aspire.

The Rosslander says the construction of a railway from the Coast to the Yukon will not save the government at the next election. We do not knew that this cuts any figure in the matter. If Hon. Mr. Turner and his colleagues can secure to British Columbia the avenue to the Golden North they can retire to private life, if the electors so decree, with the consciousness that they have gained for the province a boon the value of which no man can measure.

In order that the people of Victoria may not be kept in suspense as to the war news, the Colonist will issue a bulletin to-morrow morning, which will be on sale at an early hour. As this will not be part of the regular edition of the paper it will not be delivered to subscribers.

The chase of the Don Pedro by the New York was not so valiant a performance as to be worth telling by wire. As a matter of fact the capture of the ship was not very different from an act of piracy. The nations were not at war when it was done.

The Nanaimo Review has entered upon its second year of publication and says it is in first class shape to go on for the future. The Colonist is not often able to agree with the Review on political questions, but is glad to know it is prospering.

In ordering the charge at Atbara, General Kitchener did not tell the troops to "remember God." What he said was "Remember Gordon."

BY WAY OF VARIETY.

When we were two by the summer sea,
Just one umbrella would do—ah, me!
Now we are one, and when storms are rough,
Even two umbrellas are not enough.
—Chicago Record.

"George, you've been fighting again."

"Well, 'taint my fault, ma. Me an' Jim Sturges have been fightin' all term, an' I got kind o' tired of it. So yesterday I granted him an armistice."

"An armistice! Well, what then?"

"Why, Jim jumped on me an' licked me just the same."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"I can see through the whole scheme in a minute," said the baseball magnate. "Everybody knows that one of the most interesting things on earth is a fight. It comes mighty close to being unprofessional."

"What is the difficulty?"

"Just as soon as we announce that we're not going to have any more disorder on the baseball grounds the congress people get together and try to attract attention to themselves."—Washington Star.

War is horrible in more than one way. If you don't believe it you have not been around any of the armories where the following joke is current:

"Did you hear about the battery's harness being stolen just as it is about to be needed?"

"No. That's hard luck. Can't they find it?"

"They can't find a bit of it—not even a trace."

Thus far, however, no casualties have been reported.—Cleveland Leader.

"I can't understand women at all."

"Any new trouble?"

"Yes; here's a girl who says my blunt remarks pierced her heart."—Chicago Record.

Teacher—Now, Johnny, who was Robinson Crusoe?

Johnny—He was de duck wot got a long term on de island.—Harlem Life.

A young man at college who had far overdrawn his account with the home folks, as a last resort wrote home as follows:

"Father—I want a check for $50 in order to join the military class, as I am going to enlist in the army as soon as hostilities are declared."

To this letter the old man replied, briefly:

"Jim—I at all through the war, an' wuz wounded seven times without ever j'inin' any military class. Thar ain't no art in it. All you got ter do is—shet yer eyes, pray the Lord, an' pull the trigger!"—Atlanta Constitution.

There is a German proverb which says: "No looking-glass ever tells a woman she is ugly."

No sensible man ever does either.—Cleveland Leader.

"If you insist upon knowing, there are two reasons for my refusing you."

"And the are ?"

"Yourself and another man."—Life.

Bramble—The theory that women have no sense in humor is wrong.

Wesley—How do you explain it?

Bramble—Whenever Aunt Susan comes to make us one of her long visits my wife fairly compels us to live on sponge cake.—Chicago News.

Jason—What's Bill Lidlers doin' now sence he got let out o' office?

Abner—I allow he's writin' jokes for the county paper. Anyway, the paper has a lot of jokes every week signed "Ex."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Charley Bragg—Yes, Miss Brightly, it costs me ten thousand a year to live.

Miss Brightly—Oh, Mr. Bragg, do you think it's worth it?—Tit-Bits.

"And you don't believe there were ever mermaids?" asked the boarder who has gone in for the Greek cult.

"No," said the Cheerful Idiot. "Those mermaid stories are very fishy tails."—Indianapolis Journal.

Mrs. Bainbridge—The girls of to-day should be taught to say "No."

Mrs. Hemphill—That's what I think. The pet things all say "Nit."—Harper's Bazar.

Evession—"Ain't I a little bow-legged?" asked the dubious young man. "Bow-legged?" said the tailor. "The idea! Your lower limbs, sir, are absolutely without a parallel."—Indianapolis Journal.

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