

The Colonist.

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CLAIRVOYANCE APPLIED.

The Labor Conference and its result have greatly exercised the mind and the spirit of the Vancouver News-Advertiser.

The action of the delegates has placed it in a very difficult and a very delicate position. It cannot attempt to justify the demands which the delegates made in so peculiar a manner, but it evidently believes that it must say something commendatory of the Government for declining to entertain demands which, it does not venture to say, are either just or reasonable. It does say something—a very great deal in fact. But it is a case of many words darkening counsel. Our contemporary cannot make even a fair start without venturing an assumption which is both groundless and unwarrantable. It arrogates to itself the attribute of omniscience when it asserts that the Government had a motive for inviting delegates quite distinct from the ostensible motive. Now, when a writer commences a train of reasoning by assuming as true a proposition as to the truth of which he cannot possibly know anything, it may be taken for granted that his object is to deceive his readers. Any reasoning founded upon a false assumption such as this, is, must necessarily be unsound and unreliable.

Not only does the editor of the News-Advertiser undertake to create a motive for the Government, but he by some occult process of mind-reading invents a "real object" for the course pursued by the Ministers.

This is "to bring discredit on the actions of the delegates." Here the editor finds himself in so sore a strait that he is forced to attribute to the members of the Government the supernatural powers which he tries to make the public believe he himself possesses. If the Government by inviting the delegates to a conference, intended to bring them into discredit, it is clear that they must have known beforehand how the delegates would act. They must have foreseen that the delegates would make demands to which they could not accede, and which their friends could not attempt to justify, and the coming events of the conference must not only have cast their shadows before, but must have been clearly seen by the Ministry before the invitations were issued. An Opposition editor must indeed be badly off for arguments to urge against the Government when he uses such as can only be made to have the appearance of reason by attributing to its members supernatural or preternatural powers. On the supposition that both the editor and the Government are clairvoyant, the News-Advertiser asserts with the utmost confidence that "the whole scheme was a trap laid by the Government to entangle the union."

It is a great pity that the delegates did not possess the gift of second-sight as well as the Government and the editor of the News-Advertiser. If they had acted with reason and moderation; if they had discussed the Labor Act calmly and intelligently; if they had not allowed the prospect of office to disturb them; and if they had drawn up resolutions that must recommend themselves to the good sense of the community, they would have avoided the "trap" which the Advertiser says was laid for them, and would have come out of the conference with flying colors and with a reputation for good sense, disinterestedness and moderation that would have stood them in good stead on future occasions.

When the News-Advertiser ceases to deal with prophecy and clairvoyance and descends upon earthly and commonplace matters in a reasonable way, as it does in the third article of the series, we cease to be amused. On Saturday our contemporary comments upon the fifth of the delegates' resolutions, which is as follows:

"That this meeting of delegates endorse the principle of compulsory arbitration, and that the Government be urged to incor-

porate said principle in the Act at the next session of the Legislature."

The Advertiser proceeds to argue that the principle of compulsory arbitration urged upon the Government by the delegates is, in the words of Sir Charles Russell, "a most crude attempt to deal with a large and important question. It was a distinctly retrograde movement. He failed to see how the law could compel 10,000 men if they chose to strike, to go back to work or to make employers who chose to stop their works re-open them."

The funny part of the Advertiser's article is that while it condemns the Government severely for giving a civil but exceedingly non-committal answer to this resolution, it has not a word of rebuke for the labor delegates who urgently recommended the Government to incorporate the obnoxious principle in the Labor Act. Such inconsistency is simply ridiculous. It certainly would have been discourteous in the Government to reject the proposition made by the delegates, and which at any rate is arguable, curtly and contemptuously. But no sensible man can find fault with them for promising to give the request of the delegates their serious consideration. But there is something grotesquely absurd in the Advertiser's condemning the Government's civility while it has not a word of censure for the labor delegates who urged the Government to make the "crude attempt" a part of the law of the land.

VERY MUCH MISTAKEN.

The labor delegates, if they have done nothing for the cause of labor, have, it cannot be denied, out on a great deal of work for the Opposition newspapers.

The Victoria Times, the Vancouver News-Advertiser, and the Nanaimo Free Press have worked very hard indeed to lead the public to believe that the labor delegates had some sort of justification for the stand they took at Victoria, and that the Government did wrong in inviting the representatives of the trade organizations to a friendly conference to consider the new labor law. The diligence and the zeal of our contemporaries are to be commended, but they can hardly be congratulated on their efforts to put the delegates in the right or the Government in the wrong.

The Times contends that the Government had good reason to believe that "organized labor" would take the position assumed by the delegates. It says:

"THE COLONIST wants to know when organized labor gave any indications of this; but it surely cannot have forgotten the action of the Trades and Labor Council in this city, with which at the time it found fault. That action, if we are not mistaken, was endorsed by other councils in the Province. They stated most distinctly their opinions that the labor bureau officials should be taken from the labor ranks."

The expression of their opinion was very far indeed from being distinct. What they did say was "that efficiency in the work of the department demands that the interests of labor be recognized in an official capacity"—that and nothing more. This is as far as possible from distinctly demanding that all the officials of the Bureau be taken from the ranks of labor. Our contemporary is mistaken, too, when it states that we, at the time, found fault with the action of the Council. We made no comment upon it either of condemnation or commendation.

With such license of assertion as our contemporary takes, there is no proposition that can be framed that it cannot prove. We are quite sure that neither the Government nor any man of common sense, either in or out of the labor organizations, could infer from the very indefinite statement contained in the Victoria Trades and Labor Council's resolution, that the representatives of the labor organizations, when they met the Government in conference, would make the demands they did, or prefer them in such an arrogant manner. Even the Times is forced to admit that the Government could not well have granted "organized labor" the "privilege" of selecting the officers of the Bureau.

"The request," however, our contemporary continues, "was, nevertheless, quite natural from organized labor's point of view, and it must be remembered that the Government was in search of organized labor's opinion." So it is, in the opinion of the Times, only natural to expect, when men's opinions are asked on a subject of very considerable importance, that they will say what is utterly unreasonable, and make demands that cannot be granted. It would be no harm here to ask our contemporary what was it about which the delegates were asked to give their opinion? Our contemporary must be under no uncertainty relative to this matter. The organizations were invited by letter to appoint delegates. The subject to be considered was mentioned in the invitations. The delegates were therefore not taken by surprise as some of their newspaper apologists would have the public believe. They had more than two weeks to consider the subject to be deliberated upon at the conference. That subject was (we quote from the invitation to the Miners and Mine Laborers Protective Association, Nanaimo) the "Bureau of Labor Statistics and Industrial Disputes Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1893." The work then which the delegates were sent to Victoria to do was "to consider" the Labor

Statistics Act. Nothing was said in the invitation about offices of any kind, or the privilege of nominating the men who were to fill them. But the delegates seem to have almost entirely lost sight of the main object of the meeting. The appointments to office seem to have been, in their opinion, of far more importance than the efficiency of the law. Now, it seems to us that men who were really desirous that the law should be carried into effect, would have been more concerned with the duties of the officials of the Bureau, or almost wholly clerical (we had almost written mechanical), it matters very little indeed who fills them, if the men are competent to do the work. Provided the law is fair to both employers and employes, and provided all the parties concerned are fairly represented on the Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration, it does not matter a row of beans, as far as the interests of labor, organized and unorganized, are concerned, who are appointed to fill the offices of the officials of statistics. Workingmen might perform the duties efficiently or they might not. It might gratify some of them to see their comrades working in the Bureau, and it is altogether laudable for a workingman, if he is competent, to desire to get a berth in the department, but the important thing is that the law itself should be fair and effective, and that it should be judiciously applied. The delegates do not seem to have considered that everything depended upon the appointments made, and that the efficiency of the law was comparatively of far less importance.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

The President's message is exactly what those who have formed a just estimate of the man might expect it to be. On all the subjects noticed and discussed, his utterances are those of a clear-headed, patriotic, courageous, honorable man. On the Hawaiian question he, after stating clearly what he has done to find out the exact position of the United States with respect to the revolution, reiterates his determination to do what is fair and honest in the matter. The outcry that has been raised by the unprincipled jingo press has not caused him to recede in the slightest degree from the position he took after he was in possession of the facts as reported by Commissioner Blount. His explanation with reference to the Geary Act must be satisfactory to all who are interested in keeping the reputation of the United States for honorable dealing without stain.

With respect to the tariff, he shows a determination to fulfill the pledges which the party of which he is the head made previous to the last presidential election. He mentions that the true interests of all classes in the tariff have been considered in the changes that are proposed. The work of tariff reform he admits is one of great difficulty, and he believes that the bill to be submitted to Congress is as good a one as the present conditions permit. This is a subject on which much difference of opinion exists and it is to be expected that, no matter what course the President takes, he will be the object of unmeasured misrepresentation and the most virulent abuse. But, no matter how fiercely the storms may rage around his head, he may be depended upon to resist to the end any attempt to lead to do what he believes to be but for his country.

THE NAKUP AND SLOOAN RAILWAY.

In a recent issue of the Nelson Tribune is an article of a remarkable character, the object of which is to show that the Provincial Government has pledged the public credit to the extent of \$900,000 for the construction of the Nakup and Slooan railway, and that the contract for the same is being carried out in such a cheap and imperfect manner that the actual cost will barely exceed \$600,000. The inference is then drawn from the Tribune that there will be a surplus of \$300,000, and the question is asked: Where is the money going?

By the use of confused and ambiguous sentences, the probabilities of great corruption and jobbery—such as the writer is so cowardly to impute openly—are insinuated in the most unmistakable way. We give below the extracts from the Tribune, according to the estimate of competent engineers and the judgment of practical men who have seen the class of work put in. Where is the surplus of \$300,000 going? Absolutely to stand at the disposal of the contractor, as the writer says.

After alleging that the line is light—the curves sharp—the materials badly built and the simplest ever put into a Canadian road, the article proceeds to say:

"So far, so good, as regards the cost of the road to the construction company, but when the cost of the road to the taxpayer is considered it is altogether different. The road is to cost \$23,000 a mile, or \$900,000 in all. It will be completed for under \$600,000, according to the estimate of competent engineers and the judgment of practical men who have seen the class of work put in. That is a question which may be very pertinently asked of Premier Davies. It would not do to suggest that ministers of the crown are getting a share. It is too much to credit Davies with such Machiavellian ingenuity in this scheme as to flatter the people of West Kootenay that he is favoring them by the construction of the line, while at the same time he is betraying the trade against foreign competition, and at the same time to be lining his pockets against those periods of private and individual depression to which the real nature of the transaction is due. The taxpayer will never ultimately benefit to the extent of a dollar by the road. No sooner does it become a paying concern than it is found to be owned by parties who did not pay for it.

We have stated that the article from

which the above are excerpts is a remarkable one. It is not less remarkable than the fact that it should have been copied in the evening Opposition newspaper of this city, and that without any comment beyond what was contained in the title, intimating that "a margin was being worked up for some person." It is surprising, indeed, that journals which would enjoy a reputation for respectability, should permit, for political purposes, a resort to methods so contemptibly low. It is a strange commentary on men and morals and our times when a paper will insinuate in covert but no less unmistakable terms, without the slightest tittle of evidence on which to found it, that a Minister of the Crown, and the First Minister, is guilty of what would not be less than a criminal conspiracy to rob the Province. Apart from any other consequences to which we might refer, the flippancy with which such serious reflections are made and allowed to pass, cannot but be most disastrous to public confidence in all governing bodies, not to speak of public credit, which Monthly Justice regards as the basis of national greatness.

As before stated, the gravamen of the Tribune's charges is that the public credit is pledged for \$900,000, or \$23,000 a mile, while the work will not cost more than \$600,000, but when we state, as is the fact, that the public credit is not pledged to a such extent as \$900,000; that the road is not to cost \$23,000 per mile, and that the total money agreed to be guaranteed does not exceed \$17,500 per mile, or very little in excess of the figure, which even such an unjust critic as the Nelson Tribune states to be the cost of the road. In light of these facts, the possibility of the frauds so basely insinuated by an unprincipled journal vanishes.

As to the methods of construction, we are not in a position to speak in the absence of authentic information, but when it is borne in mind that the road must be accepted by the Engineer of the Railway Department of the Dominion Government, and stand the test of his scrutiny, and must also be accepted by the Engineers of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company before the latter will accept it, as stipulated under the Act of last session, it will readily be conceded that there are good reasons for rejecting the charges of faulty construction as being equally unfounded and unwarrantable with the insinuations of official corruption.

Why the Nelson Tribune, except from its inherent instincts of journalistic rapacity, should give place to insinuations of so libellous a character is difficult to conceive; it is equally incomprehensible that its course libels should be transferred to the columns of even any Opposition newspaper on the Coast. The insinuations are harmless so far as the Government or the Premier is concerned, because they are exploded by the slightest examination of the facts, but the result of such injurious statements is to damage the credit of the Province and to lower the political moral tone of the country without even the palliation of the smallest fact or political expediency to justify them. We have ample proof of how mischievous statements made by irresponsible and malignant characters have travelled where their only effect has been to impair our financial credit, for which, if accomplished, or not properly counteracted, the whole Province has to pay dearly.

THE VERNON COMMONAGE.

With its usual indelicacy and ignorance of its subject, the Times rushes in to attack the Government with respect to the management of the commonage land near Vernon.

It may be well to inform those who are liable to be misled by articles published from time to time in the Times and the Vancouver News-Advertiser, that the land referred to is a tract lying between Okanagan and Long Lakes. It comprises some twenty-five thousand acres, of which not two hundred could be utilized for agricultural purposes, it being composed of heavily rocky benches, with considerable timber, and probably some 2,000 feet above the lakes. In early days it was in the same position as other unoccupied Crown lands, but in 1877 the Indian Reserve Commissioners set it apart as grazing land, to be used in common by the whites and Indians.

The Commissioners further stated in their Minute of Decision that, failing their being possessed of authority to set the land aside as a commonage, the whole tract should be an Indian reserve. The Commissioners took this course to ensure the Indians having sufficient grazing land for their live stock, considering the other tracts set aside for them as being insufficient for their requirements.

The land was regarded as a commonage for many years and used by the settlers for grazing purposes, and it was not till the present Government came into office that any action was taken with respect to it. The construction of the Shuswap Railway brought into existence the town of Vernon, and the commonage land was within a mile or two of the town.

Consequent upon the increase of value of all real estate in the different centres of population throughout the Province, several applications were made to secure possession of some of the commonage land, which from its proximity to the town would possess a speculative value. All applications were refused. Hon. Mr. Vernon took the matter up with the Indian Reserve Department, questioning the power of the Indian Commissioners in 1877 to set aside any land as a commonage. The result was that the present Indian Reserve Commissioner, Hon. Mr. O'Reilly, visited the locality and reported that the land was not required for the Indians for pasturing purposes.

The Chief Commissioner then conferred, both personally and by letter, with the late Mr. Lumby, Government agent, and also with many of the principal citizens of Ver-

non, as to how to deal with the land now released, so as to best conserve the public interests and give the greatest satisfaction to those living in the neighborhood.

The general, almost universal, opinion was that the land should be surveyed and those portions bordering on the lake for which some applications had been made and which were only suited for residential purposes, should be divided into small blocks and sold at public auction. After the sale should any portion be left unsold it should be open to pre-emption in the usual way.

This has been done, and so far as we are aware no applications have been yet made to pre-empt the lands left unsold for the simple reason that as before stated this land not being suitable for farming, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for any settler to comply with the requirements of the land act and make a living. Should any settler consider that he can comply with these requirements, the opportunity is afforded him to do so.

Whilst the land was referred to in Provincial property, it must be conceded that those people living in the vicinity must necessarily be most affected by any regulations made by the Lands and Works Department regarding its disposal, and from the articles which have appeared in the Vernon News, the paper which must be in a position to know all the facts of the case, it is evident that whilst the Times, with a perfect ignorance of the locality and circumstances, seems to be dissatisfied, those who possess a thorough knowledge of the facts and are most interested have expressed their satisfaction with the action taken.

OSOYOOS ROCK CREEK ROAD.

With regard to the quotation from the Vernon News, published in yesterday's Times, referring to the necessity of pushing through a wagon road from the Osoyoos Valley to Boundary Creek, the Government is fully alive to its importance. The sum of eight thousand dollars was set aside for its construction at the last meeting of the Legislature, and the work has been proceeding vigorously all the winter. Some little time was consumed early in the year from total \$4,450. The loan of \$20,000 is the most reliable information as to the best route before commencing work.

Several routes were suggested, the Government eventually selecting that surveyed by Mr. Burnycott, C. E. We understand that the road is some fifty or sixty miles in length, crossing a high range of mountains, making it necessarily a difficult and expensive work. So important is it considered by the Government to exercise the greatest energy to repaid all the trade possible within the Province, that the road is being pushed to completion as rapidly as possible, though the appropriation was found to be insufficient. The steamers upon Okanagan Lake and the Shuswap and Okanagan railway will bring Boundary Creek and Kettle River people in touch with our merchants, and it is fully expected the road will be completed to Camp McKenny (about half way) before the end of the year. The remaining portion will be completed with all possible expedition in the early spring. We feel sure the Legislature will approve of the action of the Government and that those interested in mining, farming and other enterprises at Rock Creek, Boundary Creek and Kettle River will be most glad satisfied with the efforts that are being made to promote their welfare.

THE CUTLER "CORWIN."

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 5.—The U. S. revenue cutter Corwin sailed at 2 o'clock this morning. Her destination is not made public, but it is believed she carries important despatches from Washington to Honolulu. All the circumstances point to the fact that the cutter was coaled and provisioned for a long trip. Smuggling operations in this north have become so extensive of late that it is just possible that the Corwin is going after the illegal opium traffic. From the time that it was made known that the cutter was to leave, a close watch was kept on the vessel to ascertain, if possible, whether or not any strange person went on board. None were discovered, and if a secret messenger has been sent he was kept well under cover while the vessel was at the dock. The arrival of the Corwin in Honolulu, at a time when the steamers have left there, will, beyond doubt, cause some anxiety until the state of affairs is learned. Although various places were visited along the water front, it was learned that none of the crew had been ashore for the last three days. The precautions taken to prevent the men from communicating anything that they might hear on board were complete.

THE LEHIGH STRIKE.

BUFFALO, N. Y., Dec. 5.—There is no material change in the Lehigh strike situation at this end. Federation men are much encouraged and a hopeful view is taken by Grand Master Sargeant. There is no sign of a break. Sargeant left for Sayre this morning. He says the company cannot afford to continue the fight much longer, as the rolling stock is becoming badly crippled through incompetency.

JERSEY CITY, N. J., Dec. 2.—Lehigh Valley railroad officials at this end of the line claim that trains are moving as usual and the strike is a thing of the past. The strikers on the other hand are confident they are receiving wages weekly from the Brotherhood, and can hold out for some time. They say the business of the company is paralyzed, that the road cannot afford to keep up the strike, and that the numerous wrecks caused by "green" hands causing freight and passenger traffic to drop off, will, they say, bring the company to terms at an early date.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 6.—3:35 a. m.—The Lehigh Valley strike has been declared off. President Wilbur says an official statement will be made this morning. He has not receded from his position taken early in the strike.

MONTREAL, Dec. 5.—The death occurred at Windsor Mills, yesterday, of Thomas Logan, president of the Canada Paper Company for the past twenty years, and well known throughout Canada.

THE EXHIBITION PROPERTY.

Proposal That the City Should Assume It and the Association Liabilities.

A Public Burden Which a Few Private Citizens Have Endeavored to Carry.

A conference of the directors of the British Columbia Agricultural Association with the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of Victoria took place yesterday afternoon, Mayor Beaven presiding. All the other members of the City Council were present, with the exception of Ald. Baker. The Association was represented by Dr. G. L. Mills, M. P., P., the president, and Messrs. W. H. Ellis, D. R. Ker, C. E. Renouf, R. Seabrook, J. Pearce, S. Tolmie and R. T. Williams.

Dr. Mills opened the proceedings by stating that it was intended by the association to have, next year, the largest exhibition in its history, but there was a financial difficulty which, in the meantime, they wished assistance in facing. He gave a statement of the floating liabilities which are overburdening the directors at present, and said it was proposed, in brief, that the city should take over the buildings and property of the association, and assume its debts, leaving the management of the purely exhibition affairs as at present. He showed that the city had already an interest of \$25,000, represented by the money which had been advanced by the Corporation. The property, he stated, is valued at \$80,000, and there is upon it a debt of only \$24,000, so that he thought it was manifestly a good business proposition for the city which was now made. The following financial statement was submitted:

Cost of five acres of land, buildings, with shading and heating, laying water, etc. \$47,500 00

LIABILITIES: Mortgage \$30,000 00

Tax, due Provincial Government 1,500 00

Due guarantee, interest paid by them 23 00

Due Secretary 100 00

Note due May 1, 1891 1,251 00

Interest due February, 1893 750 00

\$32,931 00

The surplus thus shown is \$22,569 00 less on the last three exhibitions was, in 1891, \$1,300; 1892, \$1,250; 1893, \$1,900; total \$4,450. The loan of \$20,000 is received by a guarantee made by the directors, the note to the bank is similarly secured, and the loan is further secured by policies on the lives of five of the directors, two years premiums have been paid. The fixed charges on the property, including interest, insurance and the tax payable to the Government amounts to \$2,664.

Ald. Mann inquired whether the corporation had authority to acquire and hold property of this description.

The Mayor said the property being outside the city, he thought it would require legislative authority to purchase it, if that was what was proposed by Dr. Mills.

W. H. Ellis said with a grant of \$1,000 allowed by the Government, and the fixed charges being assumed by the city, it would not be necessary to come to the Corporation for a grant. This year the city had given \$3,000, which would be more than the whole cost to the public under the new arrangement, by which the expenses of the exhibition would be fully covered by the gate receipts.

Ald. Belyea inquired if the proposition was that the city should furnish sufficient money to pay off the floating liabilities, or to assume those liabilities and pay them off as they matured.

D. R. Ker said it seemed to him that it would be in the interest of the city to take over the liability amount by way of loan. As to running afterwards, he could assure the Council that the directors were not what might be termed anxious to desert a sinking ship. They were quite prepared to continue their efforts to make the exhibition worthy of the association. It was because of special adverse circumstances during the three successive years, that the new building had been completed that affairs were in the present unfortunate position. The directors had assumed a very heavy responsibility solely in the public interest and without any idea of recompense, and they therefore felt no compensation in seeking the corporation, as the public's representative, to come to their assistance.

The Mayor said if the mortgage could be taken up before maturity it would very materially improve the case so far as the city is concerned.

N. Shakespeare thought the directors of the association were entitled to the help of the public in bearing the burden of maintaining the association exhibition, which was undoubtedly a great source of profit to the business of Victoria. He thought that if the public were thus made directly concerned in the exhibition it would result in much more general interest on the part of the citizens.

Ald. Bagg suggested that a by-law should be formulated for presentation to the ratepayers. He thought if the matter was put in a proper light the public would do its share in assisting the association.

The Mayor, after considerable informal discussion, said it seemed to him quite evident that the association could not go on as at present, with a fixed charge of \$22,500 a month to meet. If the corporation was to invest another \$25,000 in the property, he thought the ratepayers would give their consent only on condition of becoming the absolute owner of the property, and before this could be brought about some legislation would be necessary. He thought there would be no difficulty in getting such an amendment to the Municipal Act.

Mr. Ellis suggested that a by-law might in the meantime be submitted to the ratepayers, so that there might be no unnecessary delay.

It was agreed that the Mayor and aldermen should talk over the matter between themselves and intimate to the directors the nature of the proposition which would be acceptable, and that if they thought the association should then send in a formal petition.

THE SUGAR SCHEDULE.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4.—A prominent Southern senator is understood to have said that a vigorous fight will be made on the sugar schedule as reported by the Ways and Means committee when the bill comes before the Senate. From what he said it can be assumed that the senators from sugar states will oppose endorsement of the lumpy system and will fight to the bitter end the tariff that has been fixed upon sugar. The Senator stated that an effort would be made in the Senate to change this so-called lumpy feature, which could be eliminated and a tax of not less than one and three-eighths cents placed upon refined sugar and one and three-quarters cents upon raw sugar.

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