The Colonist.

THURSDAY, JULY 6, 1899.

A CRISIS REACHED.

Premier Semlin has called upon Attorney-General Martin for his resignation. This has for some time seemed inevitable. Mr. Martin's conduct in and out of office has been such that his presence in the cabinet was a scandal. The only criticism we have to make upon Mr. Semlin's action is that it has been delayed too long.

Many strange things happen in politics, but nothing is much stranger than this. Less than a year ago Mr. Martin publicly declared his belief that Mr. Semlin was unfit for the position of premier, and Mr. Semlin himself said that if Mr. Martin went into a cabinet no one could keep him from leading it. Now we have Mr. Semlin calling upon Mr. Martin to resign his seat, and we presume prepared to advise the Lieutenant-Governor to dismiss him, if that step is necessary. This is a very remarkable overturn to come about in so short a time.

While Mr. Martin declined to say anything to the Colonist, the despatch to the Vancouver Province undoubtedly expresses his views, and it is therein stated that he will not resign. He is also alleged to take the position that under the provincial constitution he stands on precisely the same footing as Mr. Semlin. We have been expecting that this point would be taken. The Constitution Act makes no mention of the position of Premier, which is not a statutory office. Its existence is not known to the law of any British country. The Colonist has always contended, and still holds, that the principles of responsible government apply to British Columbia, and this being the case Mr. Semlin is within his constitutional rights in asking for Mr. Martin's resignation. He cannot compel him to resign, but he can advise the Lieutenant-Governor to dismiss him, and His Honor must either do so or be prepared to accept the resignation of the present ministry. We believe Lieutenant-Governor McInnes will act upon Mr. Semlin's recommendation.

The Nanaimo Free Press indulges in some speculations as to what may happen, and the street is full of rumors. The chief interest attaching to these is from the fact that they show the diverse elements which must be taken into account in the solution of the situation. We do not believe that any one sees the way out of it. The only thing certain is that the Lieutenant-Governor must cut short his visit to Atlin.

THE PACIFIC CABLE OFFER.

We print the correspondence between the provincial and federal governments regarding the Pacific cable. The chief feature worth considering is Mr. Cotton's letter to Sir Wilfrid Laurier in confirmation of his telegram. It will be remembered that when the offer was made the Colonist expressed itself as very favorably impressed by it, but at the same time said the matter was one to be dealt with by the legislature, expressing the opinion that the Opposition would support any legislation necessary. We have since had abundant reason to think that the opposition would not do so, and it is also very evident that it will not be necessary for the province to take any action in the matter at all. We do not think it necessary, therefore, to make any observations now as to the desirability of giving provincial aid to such an undertaking; but the offer made by Mr. Cotton on behalf of the government may very properly be considered. This, it will be seen from the correspondence, was an unconditional offer of one-ninth of the cost of the cable, and there is not anywhere in his letter or telegram the least suggestion that the approval of the legislature would have been obtained.

Such a course cannot be justified, even by those who favor the co-operation of the province in the project, rather than that it should be a failure. In his telegram and letter Mr. Cotton, speaking for the government, undertook to commit the province to an expenditure of $1,000,000 without any warrant whatever for so doing. We hold that the view of the powers of a government implied in this offer cannot be defended. The most that any government has any warrant for doing is to submit to the legislature a proposition authorizing it to enter into a contract of that nature. We are fully aware that the power of a government to enter into agreements of any nature is very wide. It perhaps extends far enough to enable it to subscribe to the cost of the Pacific cable. The government must have thought so, or it would not have made the bold offer contained in the letter. Accepting this view of the case, and any other view would make Mr. Cotton's telegram and letter the veriest nonsense, we find that it was the intention of the government to commit the province to an expenditure of a million dollars without asking permission of the legislature to do so, an act that is without precedent or parallel in the history of colonial governments.

We feel the more disposed to discuss this principle because we felt able to support the proposal to extend provincial aid to the cable. It will be noticed that Sir Wilfrid Laurier did not accept the offer with any great degree of enthusiasm, if he can be said to have accepted it at all, and although the provincial government urged the federal Premier to obtain the necessary legislation during the present session of parliament, that no promise was made by Sir Wilfrid in response thereto. We are left in some doubt as to just what Mr. Cotton means in his second letter. He employs very general language, and it is susceptible of being interpreted to mean that the Dominion parliament could give the needed legal sanction to the proposal. Is this what Mr. Cotton meant? If not, what did he mean? If the suggestion is that the province should be committed to the subscription of a million dollars to the cable, without consulting the legislature at all, through the instrumentality of either the Dominion or the Imperial parliament, a complexion is put on the offer that completely nullifies the authority of the local legislature to deal with the finances of the province. If this is not what is meant, and it was the intention of the government to enter into an agreement with the Imperial, Dominion and Australian governments, then we have this extraordinary condition of things presented, that the legislature would find its hands tied by a contract upon which it had never been consulted, involving a radically new departure in policy, and pledging the province to a large expenditure. Whether that expenditure would be either directly or indirectly profitable is neither here nor there. We are inclined to believe it would be both; but that is not the point. We have either constitutional and responsible government in this province, or we have not, and we wish to enter a strong protest against any government undertaking to commit the province to a great outlay without either first obtaining legislative sanction or making the offer conditional upon the approval of the legislature being obtained. Suppose the offer contained in Mr. Cotton's letter had been accepted, and the several governments had acted upon it. Would the government have undertaken to pay over the million dollars? If so, where would the money have come from? Was it to be taken from the $2,000,000 loan? If the legislature was to be asked to provide the money, in what condition would it have been to deal with such a request, when the credit of the province had already been committed to such an expenditure? Nothing more dangerous than this attempted usurpation of power by the government can be imagined, and as one of the few papers in the province which endorsed the idea of provincial aid to the cable, the Colonist desires to place itself on record, and believes it to be its bounden duty to go on record as protesting in the strongest possible way against the manner in which, so far as appears from the correspondence, the government intended to extend that aid.

The Colonist does not want any one to suppose that it has been converted to spiritualism, but in the interest of news it is proper to say that the degree of attention paid to this and kindred subjects by the press of the Eastern States at present is very remarkable. The leader in the inquiry is the New York Herald, and in the columns of that paper some very surprising things have recently appeared. While the Herald is not wholly free from a tendency towards sensationalism, it has some character to lose, which cannot be said of some of its city contemporaries, and we must suppose that when it quotes persons as having declared they have had a demonstration of the immortality of the soul through spiritual agencies, so strong that there is no room for doubt whatever, the people responsible for what the paper contains must be understood as guaranteeing the bona fides of the statement and vouching to some extent for the standing of its informants. It does not follow that the published statements must be accepted. The only thing, and it is a very interesting thing, is that a very great deal of serious attention appears to be now given to what until recently nearly every one believed was the rankest kind of a fraud.

THE FUTURE OF ATLIN.

Some disappointment is being expressed because Atlin is not proving a country like the Klondike, where a fortune can be taken out of a claim in a season. It is premature to say that the district does not contain some phenomenally rich gravel, but admitting that it does not, we do not know that Victoria has much reason for disappointment. From the standpoint of the individual miner it is of course best that claims should be very rich and the gold easily secured. From the standpoint of the general mercantile community it is better that there should be a long continued period in which a large number of men will be employed. At present the indications are that Atlin will not be thrown aside after a few years like a sucked orange, but that the business of mining will be carried on a long time and give employment to a great many people.

Such information as the Colonist has been able to gather leads it to think that Atlin will make quite a large number of miners comfortably well off through the working of ordinary placer claims, with a prospect in exceptional cases of very large returns, and that hydraulic and quartz mining will be a permanent and profitable industry there for many years. The first two prospositions are already borne out by known facts. The third requires to be substantiated by more elaborate prospecting, the discoveries of quartz as yet being for the most part of a superficial character. Under these circumstances it appears reasonable for the business men of the Coast cities to look forward to the development of a large, permanent and profitable business with Atlin.

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VISITING PRESSMEN.

It is not too soon for those interested to consider what shall be done when Victoria is visited by the hundred or more representatives of the Eastern press now on their way here. We are likely to have a very large delegation from the Editorial Association of the United States here at any early day, but it is probably out of the question to attempt anything more in this case than the most formal reception. They come simply as sight-seers. With our Eastern Canadian visitors the case is different. Presumably they come to learn something about the country. They have heard much about the West, and the object of their visit is undoubtedly as much to acquire information as to have a good time. Victoria should endeavor to put their visit to profitable use. We should not be content simply to show them the sights of the town and vicinity, but ought to make an effort to impress them with the possibilities of Victoria and British Columbia. They should go home feeling not only that they have seen many things worth looking at, but that they have come in touch with local sentiment. What is the best way to bring this about we shall not attempt to say in this article, but we commend the matter to those who give such things their attention.

THE POLITICAL CRISIS.

If patriotism prevails above personal considerations, it will be a fortunate thing for this province that the present political crisis has arisen. The opportunity now at hand is one such as has rarely been presented. The people are heartily sick of political bickering. They will hail with delight the formation of a government which will give the province a clean administration and a progressive policy. The opportunity has also come for the restoration of constitutional principles to their proper place in the affairs of British Columbia. We hear much nowadays of the right way of playing the game of politics. There are many ways of doing it, but only one that is worthy of consideration, and it is that which takes into account the wishes of the people. The men, or coterie of men, who place reliance upon hole-in-the-corner work will meet with disaster. Let what is done be done openly and above-board. There has been enough of intrigue.

The views of the Colonist as to the principles which should prevail in determining the policy of the government of this province must be well known, but no harm can be done by restating them. It is utterly opposed to the dominance of any clique or section. It desires to see in office a government that will be entrenched in the confidence of the people at large; so strongly entrenched that it will lie in no one's mouth to say that it is dominated by any single influence, no matter how important it may be. It desires to aid in placing in power a government which by the ability and personal standing of its members and by the comprehensive nature of its policy will be in a position to act independently on all questions; a government which will be in a position to insist if necessary upon the proper treatment of the province at the hands of the federal administration, and at the same time be able to urge our claims with some prospect of success — in short, a British Columbia government, which will conscientiously devote itself to the advancement of the interests of our Imperial province.

It must be patent to everybody that wise legislation is necessary if the great resources of British Columbia are to be developed and the people are to enjoy any large degree of prosperity. There must be an end to law-making calculated to alarm investors and unsettle the minds of the people. The arts of the demagogue have no place, or ought to have no place, in our politics. Investments should be encouraged and protected, and at the same time those who have only their day's labor to put on the market should be shielded whenever it is necessary from oppression. We shall not go into detail on this point, but to avoid being misunderstood may add that these things will not be accomplished by arbitrary legislation, but by laws framed on business principles and adjustable to the varied conditions to which they may be applied. The importation into our politics of the pernicious doctrine that labor and capital are antagonistic has done harm enough already. Of all parts of the world, there is none where the workingman and the moneyed man have more interests in common or more to gain by acting in harmony than in British Columbia. This is a province where the opportunities are such that the wage-earner of to-day may be the employer of to-morrow; where there is no division in the population into classes, and where the man who attempts to create such a division should be driven out of public life.

To this frank statement of policy we add an equally frank statement of the means of carrying it out. The object above pointed out can be reached readily enough, if those who have stood for these principles heretofore stand to their guns now. We submit it to be the duty of the Lieutenant-Governor to call the legislature together and permit the representatives to deal with the crisis that has arisen. There are enough men of independent and progressive views in the house to form a government which will command the confidence of the country.

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MR. MARTIN'S CANARD.

It matters very little to the Colonist how the members of the late government wash their dirty linen. The operation promises to be sufficiently nauseating before it is finished. But there is a portion of Mr. Martin's letter to Mr. Semlin which calls for some passing comment, and that is his affirmation that Messrs. Semlin and Cotton were parties to a scheme to establish in British Columbia a government on purely Conservative lines. We do not believe there is a grain of truth in this, and think the suggestion simply a characteristic one on the part of Mr. Martin to rally to his support the Liberal element in the house and the country. In this he will ignominiously fail. When the Liberals of British Columbia look for a leader they will select a man more acceptable to the government at Ottawa than the Attorney-General.

The Colonist has no reason to claim to be in the confidence of either Mr. Semlin or Mr. Cotton, but it believes it knows their views on this subject very well and that they are both opposed to introducing federal lines into the local arena. It is known to the Colonist that they have both expressed themselves very frankly on this point, and we shall ask some better proof than Mr. Martin's suspicions before believing that they have changed their minds. In this connection Mr. Martin mentions the names of Mr. Helmcken and Mr. Higgins. The Colonist knows Mr. Helmcken's views on this question very well, and has known them for a long time. Mr. Helmcken, as becomes a native son of British Columbia, favors the formation of a strong British Columbia party, which will neither be under obligation nor hostile to the government which for the time being may be in power at Ottawa. He realizes that British Columbia's interests are dearer to her own people than anything else, and that there is sufficient in the promotion of these to call for the best that is in our public men, without dividing their efforts by bolstering up or pulling down a federal ministry. As for Mr. Higgins it is well known that he is wholly opposed to the introduction of federal lines into local politics. Moreover, Mr. Martin has no warrant for asserting that Messrs. Helmcken and Higgins would enter a government led by Mr. Semlin. In fact the whole suggestion is the clumsy invention of a discredited man.

THE ATTACK ON SIR HIBBERT.

The Times in the course of an article which is chiefly noticeable for its scurrility, asks if any Conservative paper in Canada will claim that Sir Hibbert Tupper has proved the case which he presented to parliament in support of his request for a judicial inquiry into the affairs of the Yukon. No Conservative paper will do anything of the kind, but every paper in Canada, Liberal as well as Conservative, will admit that this failure is not his fault. Sir Hibbert did not profess to be able to prove his allegations on the floor of the house. If he had been able to do that, what would have been the sense in asking for a judicial inquiry? He took the only manly course that a member could take. He made certain grave allegations. He did not pretend to have a personal knowledge of the facts, but only that he had made such investigations as satisfied him that the statements made by him could be proved before an impartial tribunal. Sir Hibbert Tupper is a lawyer and a man of the world. He knows that the best informed person, who relies upon the statements of others for proof of any given state of facts, may be disappointed. He therefore took the very extraordinary but highly honorable course of undertaking to accept personally and politically the consequence of failure. That we may not be accused of stating his undertaking in this regard too strongly, we quote the version of his remarks printed in the Times:

> I am prepared, if the commission is granted on the terms suggested, to abide by the result, and to consider that by failure to substantiate the charges made I will have forfeited my right to sit in parliament or to hold any office in the gift of the crown. I make that statement after the most careful consideration I could give it, in order to convince parliament and the country that while I am taking privileges as a member of the House of Commons, I do so in order to strengthen my efforts to bring to the light of day the information which I believe to be based on facts. * * * I consider I have the right to exercise the privilege a member of the House of Commons possesses to make these statements without incurring any greater responsibility than the loss of a parliamentary seat as a representative of the commonwealth. But I waive all, not only my seat in this parliament, but my right to hold office in my native country. I am prepared practically for all the pains and penalties which are in the discretion of parliament. I am prepared for more than that in order that great good may come out of the investigation, as it will come if the investigation is granted, and it is for the reason that benefit may come to Canada that I am prepared to incur the risk I have mentioned, great as it is to a man of even ordinary ambition, following failure in an important step of this character, that he disentitles himself not only to the confidence of his countrymen in any public matter, but to the confidence of his sovereign in connection with any political preferment in the gift of the crown.

We ask the most determined opponent of Sir Hibbert Tupper and the Conservative party if this is not the fearless language of an honest and sincere man. Will any one say that a man who made such a statement as this in his place in parliament did not believe in the case he was presenting, and was not honest in presenting it? No words of qualification are used. A partial failure to make good his indictment would be a forfeiture of his seat and his political future. What more can be asked of any one? But this proof was not to be given in the course of his speech. It was to legal proof, under oath, by competent witnesses, before an impartial tribunal. About the adequacy of any other kind of proof there might be quibbling. Sir Hibbert might have said that he would make his case good on the floor of parliament, under similar penalty, and it would always have to remain a matter of opinion whether or not he had done so. There would always be a chance to protect himself from a whole or partial failure. But he took no such cowardly course. He made the charges, and boldly burned the bridges behind him. He said, in substance, that he demanded that the integrity of the administration of the Yukon should be passed upon by a court on sworn testimony, that he himself would aid in the prosecution of the case, and that a verdict of acquittal of any of the accused should be considered by his fellow countrymen as his political condemnation. No man could make a more courageous offer. The government did not see fit to take up his challenge, but that is not his fault. He did his duty as an honorable gentleman. He might have done less, and still kept within what are ordinarily considered the requirements of political warfare. He could not do more in response to the dictates of the highest patriotism.

A FEW MINOR POINTS.

A good many questions were propounded to the Colonist yesterday which indicate that there are some things about constitutional government not very well understood by most people. Here are some of them:

Must Mr. Martin resign the Attorney-Generalship because Mr. Semlin has asked him to? The answer is that he need not. He can legally hold office until dismissed by the Lieutenant-Governor. He is just as much attorney-general now as he has been at any time since his appointment.

Must the Lieutenant-Governor dismiss Mr. Martin if asked to do so by Mr. Semlin or a majority of the cabinet? Not necessarily. He may refuse to accept the advice of his ministers in this particular, which would of course leave them no alternative except to resign.

Can the Lieutenant-Governor decline to accept any one recommended as a member of his cabinet by the Premier? He can and it rests with the Premier whether or not such a refusal shall be regarded as an expression of want of confidence.

Has the Lieutenant-Governor any right to consult his personal predilections in regard to members of the cabinet? He undoubtedly has. A ministry must possess the confidence both of the Lieutenant-Governor and the legislature.

Does the resignation of a premier carry with it the resignation of the whole ministry? It unquestionably does in Great Britain, and most of the colonies, but there may be some doubt if under the peculiar phraseology of our constitution act this is strictly true of British Columbia. In point of fact it would be true of this province, because if the Lieutenant-Governor accepted the resignation of the Premier as such it would be both tendered and accepted on behalf of the whole government.

We may add that in the opinion of this paper the constitution act must be construed in the light cast upon it by constitutional usage in the self-governing portions of the British Empire. Of itself it does not give the province responsible government in so many words. It does so in effect, because it vests in the Lieutenant-Governor and legislature powers formerly exercised by the Colonial Office. In working it out we have always contended that the principles of responsible government, as understood and practised in Great Britain, must be taken as a part and parcel of the act, and this not because of anything in the act itself, but because those principls are innate in British institutions.

However great the multitude of Joe Martin's shortcomings, he has at least the saving merit of humor. It will be noted that he subscribes himself "Yours faithfully," in his long diatribe against his leader.

One half the land area of the globe and one-third of its population are included within what are called colonies, dependencies or spheres of influence. Of the 531 000,000 people in this subordinate relation only those embraced in certain British Colonies make their own laws. Over 500,000,000 have therefore not only no voice in making their own laws, for this is true of the millions of Russia and China also, but are governed by laws made in countries that they have never seen and for the most part by people who have never seen the countries and people for which they legislate.

A young Swede, named Orloff, has discovered what he calls X-rays, and are described as more like "materialized will power" than anything else, which he claims can be transmitted to any distance within the range of sight and used for such purposes as steering balloons, exploding dynamite and so on. What they are Mr. Orloff seems to have no more idea than any one else. It is becoming more and more evident every day that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy. We are in fact simply beginning to learn elementary things about the world in which we live.

It is an extraordinary thing that Dreyfus should be treated as a prisoner, but doubtless the French government knows Frenchmen well enough to be the best judge of the course that should be taken. Popular opinion will have time to tone down before he is set at liberty.

All cases of weak or lame back, backache, rheumatism, will find relief by wearing one of Carter's Smart Weed and Belladonna Backache Plasters. Price, 25 cents. Try them.

That is a very interesting story about Sir Hibbert Tupper running away from Ottawa. It would be as well to hear what Sir Hibbert has to say on the subject before jumping to any conclusion.

The London Times thinks the Dominion government would have been better advised if it had treated the Yukon charges more seriously. We think this will be the general opinion at home as well as abroad.

We hope the venturesome fellows who are to set sail on the Xora to-day will have a safe and prosperous voyage, but they are taking a heavy risk. However there is risk even in staying at home. As another adventurer said: "More people die in their beds than anywhere else, but that is no reason why a man shouldn't go to bed."

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FAME'S PATHWAY.

Crown Prince Frederick William of Prussia will enter the regular university course at Bonn next fall.

Mark Twain will return to America in September. His visit to London is primarily to arrange for an English edition de luxe of his collected works.

Alexander Thompson has resigned his membership in the board of trustees of Wabash college, after serving for 55 years. Judge Cary Stimson of Terre Haute was chosen to fill the vacancy.

J. Pierpont Morgan, the New York millionaire, has just purchased one of the finest private libraries of London, for which he paid the sum of $150,000. Among the treasures included in this sale is a first-folio Shakespeare, said to be the best extant.

The Austrian Emperor leads a very regular life. He breakfasts every morning (summer and winter) at 5 o'clock, on some cold meat and a cup of coffee. At noon he takes luncheon, and at 3 dinner. He drinks one glass of beer daily, and a few glasses of wine, always the same kind. With the stroke of 9 o'clock he goes to bed.

Mr. Kipling now has 23 suits in process against as many publishers and book-sellers throughout the United States.

The Duchess of Albany will unveil the memorial to Archbishop Benson in the nave of Canterbury cathedral on July 8.

The Widow Bland is true to her late husband's memory. She wears suspended from her neck the first silver dollar coined under the Bland law.

John S. Sargent has received a commission from the Harvard club to paint the portraits of Joseph H. Choate and J. C. Carter, the remuneration to be $8,000.

Admiral Schley says of his Western trip: "If a man had two reasons for pride in his country and should then visit the West, he would return with a hundred more."

If you are nervous or dyspeptic try Carter's Little Nerve Pills. Dyspepsia makes you nervous, and nervousness makes you dyspeptic; either one renders you miserable, and these little pills cure both.

The other evening, about seven o'clock, as an excursion train returning from Parsonstown to Dublin, left Ballybrophy station, a quarrel arose between two men, as the result of which one man jumped from the moving train and had a marvellous escape from serious injury, as his arm got entangled in the communication cord which runs along the side of the carriages. After being pulled along several yards he finally got out of his rather dangerous position.

While Messrs. Brewer and Widdowson were fishing at Littlehampton they noticed that their sport was interfered with by an unusal visitor in the shape of a seal. A gun was obtained, and the seal was shot and brought to the shore. It was a fine animal, weighing about a hundredweight.

It was stated at a London inquest on a man who committed suicide that the deceased's father, mother and uncle had all taken their own lives.

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BORN.

EATON—In Vancouver, on the 18th inst., the wife of G. T. Eaton, of a son.

COLES.—On the 4th inst., to the wife of Mr. Richard Coles, a daughter.

MARRIED.

MARTIN-ALGAR—On the 28th instant, at the residence of Mr. H. A. Morgan, Vancouver, by the Rev. John Reid, Andrew Christian Martin, to Nellie Blanche Algar.

CHAPMAN-BROWN—On the 27th instant, at the Metropolitan church, Victoria, B. C., by the Rev. J. C. Speer, Hedley H. R. Chapman, to Adelaide, eldest daughter of D. Brown, Esq., of London, England.

DIED.

THOMPSON—On the 28th instant, at his residence, 199 Douglas street, Walter Thompson, a native of England; aged 28 years.

ALLATT—At the residence of Mr. John M. Langley, 223 Fort street, on the 28th instant, Elizabeth, relict of the late Thomas S. Allatt, a native of Wakefield, Yorkshire, England; aged 85 years.

ADAMS—At the residence of his son (Mr. Frank Adams), Edgewood, Burnside road, on the 3rd inst., John R. Adams, a native of St. John, N. B.; aged 72 years.

HOGARTH—At the Provincial Royal Jubilee hospital, on 2nd instant, James Hogarth, a native of Kelso, Scotland, in his 63rd year.

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