

The Colonist.

THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 1899.

PAUNCOFOTE LEADS TRUMPS.

The brief synopsis of Friday's proceedings at the peace conference suggests more than it tells. We are told that when the Russian delegate had finished his remarks upon arbitration Sir Julian Pauncofote rose and asked the conference to assent to the principle of a permanent arbitration tribunal, and that thereupon the Russian delegate produced a new proposal giving effect to Sir Julian's suggestion. This, we are told, was greeted with surprise and enthusiasm by the delegates, and the British delegate was warmly congratulated upon the effect of his move. It brought out the full strength of Russia's hand, by showing the conference how far the representative of the Czar, at whose invitation the august gathering assembled, is prepared to go for the preservation of peace. When the despatch adds that the Russian delegates were authorized by their instructions to go as far as Russia has gone, we get some idea of the value of the point gained.

It is a glorious and gratifying thing that it was a British delegate who spoke the word for permanent international arbitration, and there is not a man in all our broad Empire who will not rejoice that our brothers in language, customs and traditions, who have just emerged triumphantly from war, are with us, heart and soul, in the great work of peace. That the Czar is ready to go as far as Great Britain and the United States will lead is also a consideration full of hope for the future.

But some will ask: Of what use is an international tribunal of arbitration, seeing that it cannot enforce its decisions? It will be of the greatest value. There is such a thing as international sentiment, and to go no further back than last year, we saw, in the early days of the Spanish-American war, that international sentiment counts for a great deal. All public men recognize that nothing except the moral support of Great Britain so openly given to the United States prevented the active intervention of some of the European powers on behalf of Spain, which would have precipitated a tremendous conflict. It is safe to say that no nation will enter upon war in opposition to the united sentiment of the rest of civilization. This, of itself, means much, but there are practical considerations which enter into the matter. In the first place, war costs money, and the influence of governments can be easily exerted to render the floating of loans for war purposes extremely difficult, if not impossible. Secondly, and perhaps principally, domestic public opinion will compel governments to recognize arbitration as affording a solution of most international difficulties. We recall the words of Jeanette in the old ballad, when she expressed the wish that those who made the quarrels should be the only ones to fight. We have reached that stage now, for as people have to do the fighting, they must supply the blood and treasure which war demands, so, too, their voice controls the rulers, who speak the words which lead to war. Let the principle of arbitration be recognized, and the government which disregards it is likely to find itself called upon to settle its accounts with its own people. Thirdly, we believe there is a disposition among public men everywhere to recognize arbitration. Formerly, it was the first resort in cases of dispute; now it is the last. Formerly war was the normal condition of society; now it is abnormal. Except in such rare cases as may arise when an ambitious man, a second Napoleon, may aim at overturning existing national condition and building up an empire for himself, statesmen are likely, in the future, to regard war as something to be avoided whenever it is possible to do so without honor. This is one of the results of nineteenth century civilization and progress. A permanent tribunal of arbitration will be a powerful agency in the hands of enlightened men.

There are reasons why rulers should desire to avoid war, which have been largely instrumental in bringing about the peace conference. These are those which arise from the domestic problems now confronting every country in the world. The time has come when all the wisdom and all the energy of the ruling classes everywhere must be directed to the problems of a social nature now pressing for settlement. It is needless to specify these, for we are all more or less familiar with their nature. The Czar made no concealment of the fact that he was largely influenced by the vast domestic problems before his government. If these are not disposed of, Russia will shortly become a seething mass of discontent. What is true of this great empire is true, to a greater or less degree, of all others. Human society is being stirred to its profoundest depths. The leaven of civilization is working as never before, and the best that political wisdom can devise will fall short of the domestic requirements of every nation. This, more than anything else, is what is making for universal peace. History tells us that war cannot be successfully prosecuted abroad unless there is content at home. Every government rightly regards the result upon itself of warlike operations, no matter how they may terminate.

If we may believe the special telegrams to the New York papers, the Americans are slowly but surely capturing London. But it is just as well to remember that these despatches are prepared specially for the American palate, and that there are several other people in the metropolis besides the Bradley-Martins and the Jeromes.

THE UNION RESPONSIBLE.

An Associated Press despatch from Wardner, Idaho, says that the evidence given before the coroner's jury, which inquired into the deaths of the victims of the recent riots there, makes it "impossible to doubt that the riots and the murders of April 29th were designed and perpetrated by the miners' union as such." The despatch then goes on to give a few details showing how it was proved by the oath of members of the union that the outbreak was planned at a special meeting of the organization. All right thinking people, whether connected with a labor organization or not, will feel the deepest regret that "the evidence absolutely refutes the theory that the union as an organization was guiltless of the crimes." When working men organize for the purpose of killing those who are not members of their order, the end of the usefulness of labor unions is in sight, and all sober-minded workers will hold aloof from them. We think this is the first occasion when the responsibility for riot and murder has been brought home to a labor organization. It is probably the first occasion when the facts warranted such a conclusion. Hitherto the union men have been passive or at the most have confined themselves to the destruction of property. If lives were lost, it was not because the union intended to shed blood. In the Wardner case the union men armed themselves with stolen guns and having made the faces went out deliberately for the purpose of "driving out the scabs." It is scarcely necessary to say that such conduct cannot be permitted in any civilized community. We may grant the right of men to demand what they regard as just wages and to organize to enforce their demand by the influence of their numbers; but we deny utterly the right of any man or combination of men to dictate to others what price they shall charge for their labor. It is wrong for employers to combine and refuse to pay more than a certain wage, it is equally wrong for working men to combine and refuse to allow others to work for less than a certain wage. If a man owns a factory, a mine or a farm, he has a right to say what wages he will pay to those whom he employs. If a man owns the labor of his hands, he has an equal right to say how much he shall ask for it. As the employer has no right to use violence to compel men to work for him on any terms whatever, so no combination of working men has a right to dictate terms to others upon which they shall work, still less has any combination a shadow of justification to shoot down men, for the sole reason that they are willing to work for less than a certain rate of wages.

It is very clear that the strong arm of the law must be employed to protect men in the exercise of their liberty to work for such wages as they are willing to accept. We do not advocate the suppression of trades unions, but only the protection of persons not connected with them from interference in the exercise of their liberty of contract. Labor has no more deadly enemy than the agitator who plays upon men's passions and prejudices. If workingmen would stop and think they would realize that no executive committee is able to grasp the whole economic situation and speak ex cathedra as to how it should be dealt with. In the field of labor as in that of political life, the freedom of the individual means the safety and welfare of the mass. Labor organization, as exemplified at Wardner, is the worst foe of freedom, and therefore calls for the condemnation of every honest working man.

AN OBJECT LESSON.

The Financial News Supplement of May 2nd contains some interesting statistics relating to gold mining in West Australia. The output of gold began in 1891, or at least, that is the first year mentioned in the statistics, which were produced 30,311 ounces. Progress has been steady and the figures are worth studying. We find that in 1892, the product of the previous year was nearly doubled, the output having been 59,548 ounces. The following year saw this more than doubled, the figures for 1894 having been 110,891 ounces. In 1894 the figures were 207,131 ounces. During the next two years the advance was slower, the amounts for 1895 and 1896 respectively having been 231,512 and 281,263 ounces respectively. Then came a great leap, 1897 being down for 674,993 ounces. Greater still was the advance in 1898 when the amount of 1,050,179 ounces, or over \$200,000,000 worth of the precious metal was produced. The present year opens with even greater promise, the first three months showing a production of 316,753 ounces. If the increase is maintained at the same rate as during 1897 and 1898 the year will show fully 1,500,000 ounces or \$300,000,000 worth.

West Australia is everything else than a country which any one would choose as a residence. We refer of course to the mining section in the interior. The climate is objectionable. Water is exceedingly scarce, it being necessary to pump it for a very long distance. Artesian wells have been sunk, but the water from them is not fit for use unless it has been distilled. There has been a great amount of sickness in the mining regions and the death roll has been, and continues to be, very large. Contrasted with British Columbia the country is an inhospitable desert.

Whether our mines are likely to be more or less profitable than those of West Australia is uncertain, but that the opportunities for the investment of capital here are as good as there cannot be denied. We mean, of course, the natural opportunities. Yet what have we to show in comparison with the one hundred and ninety-seven working mines of

West Australia, which have been opened since 1891? From a somewhat hasty examination of the statements of the several companies, we estimate that they represent a capitalization of \$150,000,000, a vast sum. If a quarter of it could be obtained for British Columbia every line of business would be stimulated to a degree that we can scarcely conceive of. It is not therefore desirable that the circumstances under which this remarkable development of West Australia has taken place should be thoroughly looked into by the government and people of this province? Why is it that our sister colony can get all the capital needed for the development of her mines, while this province cannot? Is there any one who can throw some light upon this question? If so, we would be glad to hear from him.

THE BEECHY BAY CANAL.

Mr. D. W. Higgins has resurrected the Beechy Bay scheme in a letter to the Port Angeles Tribune-Times. A few years ago every one was in favor of this project, but Victoria is a sickle lady and does not know her own mind as to many things. It is satisfactory to see that this plan of obtaining railway connection to the South brought forward at this juncture, because every possible scheme bearing upon making Victoria a railway terminal ought to be discussed. We think that something is likely to be accomplished, but in the meantime the fullest possible consideration ought to be given to every project. The Beechy Bay scheme does not contemplate any aid from the city. We suppose that, if a railway ferry were put on between Port Angeles and that point, the E. & N. railway company would build a branch line down to meet it. We have no authority for stating this, but such a thing seems to be reasonable. The inducement that would be offered to the company putting on such a ferry would, we assume, be the donation of land at the best points, 350 miles are a natural navigation, and require no improvement, while to convert the remainder into a canal would require a vast expenditure of money. The owners of real estate there would doubtless hope that a town would be built up, and what sort of a competitor it would prove for the trade that now comes to Victoria it is altogether premature to say. If railway and ocean terminal facilities are provided at Beechy Bay, and connection is made with the E. & N., we suppose there is a possibility that some ocean traffic may stop there instead of at Victoria, and that mails and passengers might leave Asiatic steamers at Quarantine and be carried through to Vancouver without coming near Victoria. It is true that there is now no expeditious means of getting to Vancouver except by way of Victoria, but if travel and transportation warranted it, the means would soon be forthcoming. We have no desire to play the part of an alarmist, but it can do no harm to point out to the people of Victoria that there is some danger of the city being side-tracked, unless they make such an arrangement as will make this city the terminal point of any ferry connection that may be established with Vancouver, as it would have been under the offer of the E. & N. company. The situation calls for the best possible consideration that the city can give to it. The important feature in the new scheme is that all steamers from the Orient will call at Quarantine and with a railway within a stone's throw, so to speak, some of the traffic which we have been hoping to secure may pass by us. We do not take much stock in the idea that under any circumstances likely to occur a rival city would be built up.

THE ALASKAN BOUNDARY.

There seems to be an immense amount of ignorance in high places regarding the Alaskan boundary. Everything of a sensational character that has recently appeared in print seems to be based upon the idea that under no circumstances can there be any doubt as to the ownership of the head of Lynn Canal under the treaty of 1825, but that it must of necessity belong to the United States. As the matter appears to us, the ownership of Lynn Canal involves the whole issue. Canada is surely not squabbling about the ownership of a lot of mountain peaks. As we have understood the matter—and we claim to have understood at least a good deal of it as the hysterical correspondents of the London and New York newspapers—the Canadian claim is that the treaty, interpreted by the law of nations, gives us the heads of certain of the inlets at least, and probably a portion of the archipelago. If this contention cannot be sustained before an arbitration tribunal, Canadian ought to have nothing more to say about it. We have sufficient faith in the justice of the Canadian claim to be content to have it submitted to a board of arbitrators without any conditions whatever, and we are glad to learn that it is not true, as alleged, that the Canadian government is insisting on thecession of a port as a condition precedent to arbitration. To do so would, we think, be a mistake, and would weaken the legal strength of the Canadian claim.

THE GEORGIAN BAY CANAL.

The Liverpool Journal of Commerce of April 20th contains an interesting report of a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce in aid of the Georgian Bay canal and a leading editorial on the subject. The history of this great project and its value from a commercial standpoint are so well set out in the latter that we quote it in full: "The transportation problem is very much to the fore at the present time, and is becoming to be realized as of paramount importance to vast sections of the northern part of Canada, and, incidentally, of

our own great seaboard, may be thus summed up. How is the immense volume of traffic to the great American lakes to reach the seaboard? The best and cheapest means? In the opinion of Mr. McLeod Stewart, ex-mayor of Ottawa, that object can be best achieved by the construction of a waterway, extending from Montreal to Georgian Bay. And with a view to eliciting the sympathies of the commercial community at Liverpool in his project, Mr. Stewart addressed a meeting in Liverpool yesterday, at which were present, as a glance will show at the list of names which appears elsewhere, many gentlemen prominently identified with the trade of the Dominion. A syndicate has already been formed to bring into being the project, at the head of which is the Right Hon. Sir Edward Thornton, G.C. B., ex-British minister to the United States, and other influential gentlemen, including Mr. George G. Blackwell and Mr. Francis Duran of Montreal. The idea is by no means a new one. Mr. Stewart's father labored long and bravely for the realization of this project, but has fallen upon a worthy successor, if we may heed to the fervor with which Mr. Stewart advocated his cause and to the not less such an extraordinary consensus of approval in a scheme which he has marshalled his facts and figures. He is not alone, moreover, in his belief in the practicality and utility of the project, whether it be viewed from a military or a commercial and industrial point of view, it possesses friends. Distinguished Canadian and American gentlemen, engineers, and even no less an individual than Sir William Van Horn, from whom the name of the canal, C. P. R., opposition might have been expected, each and all have warmly praised the project. And so there cannot be such an extraordinary consensus of approval in a scheme which he has marshalled his facts and figures. 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