

The Colonist.

MONDAY, NOV. 21, 1898.

THE LEGISLATURE THREATENED.

The News-Advertiser says that the government will not hesitate to appeal to the country if the opposition attempt anything like obstruction. This is rather a bold threat, but it will not deter any member of the opposition from doing his duty, nor have any influence in gaining support for Mr. Semlin's cabinet. The members who are now in opposition are quite as sure of being returned in the event of a new election as are the others.

The threat of the News-Advertiser is very extraordinary, because it is expressed in such language as implies that some understanding has been arrived at with the Lieutenant-Governor as to the future. The events of last summer have prepared the public for almost anything, but we must decline to believe that Mr. Semlin will meet the house with a promise in his pocket from the Lieutenant-Governor that he may have a dissolution if things do not go to his liking. This would certainly be playing with loaded dice. Unconstitutional as the conduct of the Lieutenant-Governor has been, we decline to accept even the semi-official assurance of the News-Advertiser that such a promise has been given. We are not yet without a hope that a sufficient remnant of the British Constitution remains in this province to prevent such a thing as that.

Probably this is the first occasion in the history of any province of the British Empire when the Legislature was called together with a threat hanging over its head, as to what would be done in case it refused to obey the dictates of a usurping government. If coercion at the polls is objectionable and sufficient to warrant the disfranchisement of a candidate who practices it, what shall be said of such a bold attempt to coerce a whole legislature? It is to be hoped that some member of the house will discover language suitable to characterize such an unprecedented thing, and will take occasion to employ it at the earliest possible moment in the session.

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S REPRESENTATION.

The Columbian fears that British Columbia will not be found to come up to the requisite standard in point of population to entitle us to seven members after 1901. This is not wholly a matter of opinion. There are three years yet to wait until the census is taken, and we are very much inclined to believe that the Columbian will be found to be greatly in error. The population nearly doubled itself between 1881 and 1891, and although the completion of the Canadian Pacific was a stimulus to increase them, there has not been lacking since an equally cogent cause of expansion. Our contemporary says that the measure of representation fixed by the British North America act amounts to one member for every 22,900 people. We have not verified the calculation, but accepting it as correct, British Columbia to have a right to six members would have to show a population of 137,400, and to entitle it to seven members the population would have to be 148,851, any number above half the unit being regarded as equal to the unit for purposes of the law. That is to say, to entitle the province to seven members, an increase of 50,675 must have been made since 1891 and 1901. We believe there is good ground for supposing that it has already been made and a certainty that it will be exceeded by next summer.

In 1891 Vancouver city had a population of 13,708. We hardly think there will be much dispute on the proposition that Vancouver city has made an increase of 12,000 since 1891. Victoria city was credited in 1891 with 16,840 people. Judging from the school attendance and from the directory test, Victoria had gained fully 11,000 people since 1891. The normal increase in the parts of Vancouver Island not included in the city of Victoria would be at least 3,000, and it is not unreasonable to claim that the gain has been more than normal. There are many more people on the West Coast than there were in 1891 and there has been a steady increase in Nanaimo, Texada and elsewhere. It is safe to claim for the cities of Victoria and Vancouver and for Vancouver Island, exclusive of Victoria, an increase of 23,000 since 1891, or nearly half the number needed to entitle the province to seven members. There were in 1891, 28,062 people living in New Westminster district, including Cassiar, or 19,453 excluding Cassiar. The normal increase of New Westminster city and the rural parts of the district may be safely put at 3,000. Cassiar had in 1891 a population of 8,320, including Indians. There are certainly 2,500 more people in Cassiar now than then. We believe the estimate is small. When the spring rush begins a sufficient number of people will find their way into Cassiar to make the increase 10,000. In other words, Victoria, Vancouver, Westminster and Cassiar will by next spring have fully 33,000 more population than they had in 1891. This leaves 17,678 to be supplied by Yale, Cariboo and the Kootenays. Cariboo, including the Lillooet, had 5,738 population in 1891. In view of what is going on in Cariboo, Kootenay and Cassiar, we by next spring this district it is certainly not unreasonable to say that it has fully 1,000 more residents than in 1891. Yale had then 10,086 people. Yale embraces all the O. P. R. towns between Agassiz and Revelstoke, the first included and the last excluded. It includes the town in the Boundary Creek country, and the farming districts around Okanagan Lake, in

the Nicola valley and elsewhere and large mining sections. Surely it is not unreasonable to say that the population of Yale has doubled since 1891 or has had, say, an increase of 9,000. This leaves the Kootenays to make up 8,678 people. Trail Creek district alone will do this. In 1891 the whole population of the two Kootenays was 3,405. At least one Kootenay town has more than twice that population to-day and several of them have more than that number of people. Kootenay will contribute so much more than is needed to make up the necessary number of people in the province, that if the estimated increase of the cities of Victoria and Vancouver were cut in half, the requirements of the situation to entitle British Columbia to-day to seven members would be met. We venture to say that in 1901 British Columbia will be found entitled to nine members, if the unit of distribution given by the Columbian is accurate.

If we are right in our estimates given above, this province has the requisite population now to entitle it to a seventh member, and this being so, there is no obstacle in the way of such an increase being made at the forthcoming session of parliament, to take effect immediately. Under the British North America act, parliament may increase the representation of a province at any time, so long as the relative representation of the provinces is not disturbed. There is nothing to require parliament to wait until after a census is taken. It can declare as a preamble to any act that it is satisfied that the present population of the province is sufficient to entitle it to another representative. Parliament is the sole judge on this subject, and we believe there is sufficient ground for it to arrive at such a conclusion respecting British Columbia.

This is a matter of very considerable importance, and the Colonist would be glad if its contemporaries would express their views as to the accuracy of its estimate as regards the portions of the province for which they can be assumed to speak with some authority.

THE BROADENING OF CANADA.

From time to time paragraphs appear in the press suggesting that the Dominion government has in contemplation development projects, which, if carried out, will lead to the opening for settlement of that great belt of valuable territory lying immediately to the north of the portion of Canada, now occupied by settlers, and like it, extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Whether the paragraphs referred to have any foundation in fact the Colonist is not in a position to say, but it recognizes that such a project is one worthy the attention of the ablest public men in Canada, and would be most astute in valuing in its results than any other line of policy that could be adopted. We think, also, that if the federal ministry shall decide upon such a line of action, they can count upon support from the Conservative party in carrying it into effect, provided the plans are of such a nature as will commend themselves to reasonable men. There will be no factional opposition to a project involving such important results to every Canadian and to the Empire at large.

If Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his colleagues do not rise to an appreciation of their duty in the premises, we submit that it will become the duty of the Conservatives to take the matter up and to supplement their great work of opening for colonization, development and commerce the southern portion of the Dominion by providing ways and means whereby similar results can be brought about in the greater area yet unoccupied. This is the great question of the future, and upon the manner in which it is disposed of the welfare of Canada largely depends. Hitherto the attention of the Liberal party has been directed more to the alien nation to the north, which is our own, and contains room for millions of people and resources that are almost unlimited. What Canada needs more than reciprocity with the United States, more than preferential trade with the Empire, is domestic development. Our best customers are our own people.

If a line is drawn from the city of Quebec to Port Simpson, it will be approximately three thousand miles long; it will pass across an area which is substantially unoccupied and one that is well adapted to settlement. After the Laurentian hills have been passed the suggested line would traverse a region generally of lower altitude than that traversed by the Canadian Pacific, and this difference is practically equivalent to the difference in latitude. That is to say, the northerly belt, being at less elevation than the southerly belt, it has quite as favorable a climate. This slope of the continent towards the north is one of the determining factors in its temperature. It has been pointed out by more than one competent authority that it secures substantially similarity in climatic conditions between St. Paul, Minnesota, and the Peace river, although the distance between the two points in miles is 1800, and in degrees of latitude more than ten.

It is interesting in this connection to follow the 55th parallel of north latitude around the globe. Starting from Port Simpson it crosses Central British Columbia, where it is well known that below the 3,000-foot level farming operations can be carried on successfully. Crossing the Rockies it comes out upon the 55th parallel of north latitude, and the Peace river, and in a region known to be admirably adapted to settlement. It crosses Hudson Bay just at the mouth of James Bay, and then traverses Labrador. There is a great difference between the Pacific and the Atlantic shows of America where they are cut by this parallel. On the Pacific the warm Japan current secures a mild

temperature in winter, while the Polar current on the Atlantic shore produces a contrary effect. But from one side of the continent to the other the summer climate is substantially the same, and it is favorable to vegetable growth. The greater portion of the region for the opening of which we are now pleading, lies south of this parallel. Crossing to Europe, we find that the 55th parallel intersects the extreme north of Ireland and in a general way marks the line between England and Scotland. It crosses the middle of Denmark and bisects European Russia. About 150,000,000 people live in Europe within 150 miles of this parallel. The climate varies in the same order as in America, the warmer region being on the west and the colder on the east. Crossing into Asia the parallel traverses Siberia through what is known to be a region fit for the occupation of millions. Thus around the globe, with the exception of the Arctic regions, the 55th parallel of north latitude, which is practically the northern limit of the portion of Canada to which reference is now made, intersects countries of great present development and great future possibilities.

The inference to be drawn from what has been above set out is that the breadth of Canada, from its standpoint of permanent settlement, is fully 600 miles, that is, it is as wide as what we mean when we speak of the Northern states of the United States as contrasted with the Southern states, and, being longer from East to West, is more extensive in area. It is not necessary to compare the two regions in any other respect, but this may be said that it has yet not been proved that the Canadian area is not capable of as great things as that portion of the neighboring nation, which has for a century amazed the world by its progress. We plead for the broadening of Canada.

THE EDMONTON ROUTE.

Dr. Bennett, formerly of Halifax, who pleads guilty to having been instrumental in attracting public attention to the so-called Edmonton route, has, unlike most physicians, taken his own prescription, and wishes to tell the public that the route as one to the Yukon is a delusion and a snare. He also wishes to say that having gone over the whole distance from Edmonton to Fort Sylvester, on Dease river, he did not see such indications of gold as warrant any one in taking that road to anywhere in the hope of finding valuable placers on the way.

THE BAHR-EL-GHAZAL.

There is a good deal of very positive writing now going on about the Bahr-el-Ghazal, that province which France is said to intend to claim, notwithstanding the evacuation of Fashoda. But no one need pretend to be able to give an idea of what it is like in a single paragraph. Until very recently many well-informed people in Egypt were disposed to look upon this province as little more than a huge swamp. Its area is vast and not very well defined, but generally speaking it may be described as the region in which the western tributaries of the Nile take their rise. The Nile in all its long course receives no tributary from the west after passing below the Bahri-djans. Some explorers describe the region as highly fertile, one of them saying that it is capable of producing all the cotton that the world can possibly require. Another says it is the paradise of elephants, which are so numerous that although thousands are slaughtered yearly, they do not appear to decrease. A very large part of the country is at a comparatively low altitude, but there are mountainous districts, which give variety to the climate and natural products. But after all has been said that explorers or government agents have reported, the fact remains that the Bahr-el-Ghazal is one of the practically unknown corners of the earth.

The news comes from Washington that if the penny postage plan is found to work satisfactorily, we will have two-cent postage in Canada and between Canada and the United States. The information comes from a report by the United States consul at Montreal to his government. Mr. Mulock, an American who has taken anyone in Canada into his confidence on this question.

THE PROPOSED MINT.

Victoria has been shaking the tree very persistently on the mint question and Vancouver seems to be in a fair way to oppose the establishment of a mint in Canada simply because it may not be located here; but it does think that the people of this city ought to put forth all the strength which they possess to secure the establishment for Victoria. We suppose that the co-operation of Senator Templeman and Mr. W. B. McInnes, M. P., can be counted upon in this matter. The proper committee of the Board of Trade would do well to take the question up with vigor and prepare a statement of Victoria's case. Then the mint duty to be established by legislation during the coming session of parliament now seems very probable. There is therefore very little time to be lost if anything is to be done in the interests of this city.

Mr. Price Ellison, of Vernon, has been notified by the government that his appointment as stipendiary magistrate has been cancelled. As Mr. Ellison received no salary and never accepted any fees, the economy cry will hardly apply to his case. Neither can it be claimed that he has not given full satisfaction to the public. The dismissal is purely for political reasons, and presumably to make a vacancy to which the government can appoint some friend, who will draw a salary.

to take this way of reaching the Yukon goldfields have a serious responsibility resting upon them. It clearly is the duty of the Minister of the Interior to publish widely the result of Inspector Moody's trip, which demonstrates what every one who was not wilfully blind ought to have known before, namely, that the long land journey from Edmonton ought not to be undertaken by any one who aims at reaching the Yukon. What the intermediate country would prove to be like, gold producers is determined neither by Inspector Moody's flattering report nor by Dr. Bennett's unfavorable one. It is premature to express any opinion as to its value in this regard. It is not too soon to condemn it utterly as a route to the Yukon.

THE ELECTION PROTESTS.

The election protests are pretty well disposed of numerically, but enough remain unsettled to determine the complexion of the legislature. The certain loss of the seat for Lillooet by Mr. Prentice offsets the success of Mr. Higgins in Esquimalt. There seems to be very little doubt that the seat for North Yale will be given to Mr. G. B. Martin on a recount, and those who are able to form an opinion say that Mr. Booth has nothing to fear from the proceedings in relation to vacating his seat. Pending the determination of the Esquimalt case, the Colonist said that the government might find itself in a minority of four, and at best they seemed likely to be in at least a minority of two, which would mean that after they had elected a speaker, supposing that the opposition will permit them to organize the house, they would be defeated by three votes on the Address. Speaking from his own point of view, and without desiring to be understood as expressing the decision of its political friends, the Colonist thinks it would be good policy on the part of the opposition to force the fighting from the very start. If Mr. Semlin is unable to organize the house, it will be a clear constitutional intimation to the Lieutenant-Governor that he was not warranted in asking Mr. Turner for his resignation, and it would be his duty to send for that gentleman and entrust him with the formation of a new government. It must be borne in mind that the present house is fresh from the polls, and, therefore, if Mr. Semlin has a majority in it, he has no claim to be allowed a dissolution, but it would become the duty of the Lieutenant-Governor to see if any other gentleman is in a position to carry on the government without a new election.

THE GOD OF ABRAHAM.

"And none of them knew the God of Abraham." This was the comment of a gentleman at the conclusion of a conversation on the ancient civilized nations. Is it founded on fact? One of the greatest difficulties, with which rigidly orthodox people have to deal in their own minds is to reconcile the idea of a God of love with the supposed fact that uncounted millions of the human race lived and died without ever having heard of Him. They usually avoid the question, because it is impossible to frame an answer to it that will square with their religious belief. The best they feel able to do is to dismiss the whole matter as an inscrutable mystery. Yet there are millions of people in Christendom to whom the existence of such a mystery is a stumbling block of the most serious kind. Before attempting to show that the supposed ignorance of the majority of mankind on this subject may not be founded in fact, it may be well to say that while the belief of an individual doubtless has a most potent influence upon his life and future, it cannot possibly have any effect upon the life and future of anyone else, except so far as he may be able to impart it to others. A person may honestly believe, as some do, that eternal salvation is reserved for himself and a certain specified number of other people, and that belief may, in fact, be very likely to determine the character of his whole present and future existence; but it does not alter the facts of the case one iota. The warring and jarring of sects and creeds is often advanced as a reason why an intelligent man should not trouble himself to have any faith at all in religious matters; but surely it is nonsense for A to refuse to try to understand his relations to the universe and its Creator simply because B and C cannot agree what theirs is. Instead of his obligation to inquiry being lessened thereby, it is really increased. At the best a perfect solution of the problem is impossible, for it lies outside the limit of human intelligence; but it is not difficult for an intelligent person to find an explanation which to him will be sufficient. Hence the orthodoxy of many illiterate men. The church with which they associated gave them a sufficient explanation of what must remain, but

THE ATLIN COUNTRY.

It is time that the provincial government made some statement of its intentions in regard to the Atlin country. It is intended to locate a townsite and place the lots on the market, and if so when will this be done? We do not suggest that the townsite should be announced until after a surveyor has gone on the ground and fixed upon it because it would be easy to make a mistake in the matter of location. But at the earliest possible day the government ought to make known where a town will be located and put a price upon the lots. It is also desirable that something should be determined at once in regard to a highway road from the White Pass. Our information is that the Skagway railway company, to use its colloquial name, has sent surveyors in to open a trail from the Summit to the Tutchi, which a road can easily be maintained during the winter. It is also probable that the railway company will before next winter have their line extended to Bennett, so that there will be a rail and water connection with the Atlin region. According to the map issued by the Department of the Interior, the distance from the Summit to the point where the Atlin river enters Taku Arm would be not less than 80, and may be as much as 90, miles by the Lake Bennett route. The shortest possible route by a direct northeasterly course, if one is obtainable, to the southern end of Taku Arm, the distance being, by the map above referred to, 33 miles, and thence along the Arm about 6 miles to the mouth of the Atlin. The next shortest route would be by an almost easterly line to the south end of Atlin Lake, 42 miles, and thence up the lake, about 6 miles, to the mouth of Pine Creek. In view of the location of the gold fields, there is probably little to choose between the routes in point of distance; but it is of course possible that neither of them is available on account of the character of the country. We suggest that the matter is worth looking into for if the Atlin waters can be connected with the railway at the Summit by a wagon road less than 50 miles long, it might be worth while to construct one.

The distances by the Tutchi route, according to the map, are as follows: From the Summit to Tutchi Lake, 20 miles; down Tutchi Lake, 18 miles; down the Tutchi river 6 miles to Taku Arm; down Taku Arm to the mouth of Atlin river, 18 miles; total 62 miles, which would be during the winter an ice road for nearly the whole distance. This would appear to be the best possible winter route. We speak now wholly from the map. Once get a good road broken and in fine weather a loaded team would make the journey in two days without the least difficulty, and possibly less.

One reason for urging the government not to delay taking whatever steps may be necessary in this matter is that it is desirable to have matters in shape so that our own people can take advantage of the opportunities that will offer in Atlin, before foreigners begin to swarm in. If the determination of the townsite is put off until after the rush has begun, there will be a great deal of confusion. We are not disposed to be unreasonable in demands upon the government, or to unduly blame them for delay; but we submit that it would be very bad policy to procrastinate in this matter.

mainly speaking, an insoluble mystery. Thus we find sovereigns of conspicuous talent, like our own Queen and the German Kaiser; statesmen like Gladstone and the Marquis of Salisbury; soldiers like Gordon and Kitchener, and men conspicuous in every walk of life, professing the same faith as animates the humblest peasant. If an intelligent man should object that he is unable to understand this, the answer seems to be that he has probably never tried to. The God of Abraham is as many sided as the universe of mind and matter which He has created.

What was the Abrahamic discovery or inspiration in theology? It appears simply to have been that the God of the Universe was imminent in creation and the affairs of man. It was rather a renaissance than a discovery. Men before Abraham's time knew this. Men who never heard of Abraham have known it since his day. The philosophers of the ancient world realized that it must be true, and their efforts were directed to discovering some explanation of it, which would suit the necessities of mankind. The basic idea in the religious systems of India, China, and Thibet is the existence of such a deity. The system of Confucius is an exception, and he taught that the mystery is so inscrutable that it was better not to endeavor to probe it, and to confine ourselves to what is comprehensible to our reasoning faculties. He did not deny the possibility of spiritually discerning the relationship between the

Deity and man, but declined to make the effort himself or urge others to do so. This was the great point of difference between him and his illustrious contemporary Lao-tze. Many people when they speak of Abraham's faith have in mind the particular system of belief to which they have given their adherence; but it is doubtful if the great patriarch, if alive to-day, would be very much at home in any of the churches. He would have felt out of place even in the temple at Jerusalem. Since his time there has been an evolution in theology. The world is probably no nearer the solution of the mystery than he was, but it has learned more of man's relation to it. There is abundant evidence that a similar evolution was in progress long before Abraham's day. The brief narrative in the earlier chapters of Genesis, which covers a period of many thousands of years, proves this. The ancient writings which October is bringing to light, also show it. Sacred and profane history alike attest that there never was a time in the history of mankind when the race was without some glimmer, however dim, of the "Light that enlighteneth the world." In this fortunate age the people of Christendom have the life and teaching of Christ to aid them in understanding all that they can ever hope to know of the mystery of the universe, and he taught that it was better not to endeavor to probe it, and to confine ourselves to what is comprehensible to our reasoning faculties. He did not deny the possibility of spiritually discerning the relationship between the

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