

The Wayside Philosopher

ABRACADABRA.

A Balanced Budget.

The Hon. John Oliver and his colleagues are to be heartily congratulated upon the fact that they have laid before the House a Budget that will show a slight surplus.

Whatever might be said in criticism of the tremendous salary list the Government carries, and the possibility of greatly increasing the surplus by reducing the number of useless employees now at Victoria, the heartiest congratulations are due Dr. McLean on his first Budget, and all men, of whatever party, will gladly support the Government in its evidently serious attempt to avert financial disaster to the province.

Rum-Running.

While it is unfortunate for the persons involved, that they should suffer fines and imprisonment, or both, all right thinking Canadians will rejoice at the indictment of those Canadians and others, in British Columbia, who have been engaged in rum-running.

Those who suffer will pay only the just penalty for their greed and immorality. They reap what they have sown and may, in time, become convinced that lawful pursuits are the wisest and the safest, if not, at all times, the most lucrative.

The community will be the richer for being rid, for a time, at least, of some of its undesirables, and a law breaker is undesirable no matter what his social, political or financial standing may be, or whether he is by profession, or occupation, a lawyer, a barber, a banker, a teacher, an artisan or what not.

When we can see the lawbreakers, who abound in our own province, brought before the bar of justice and properly punished, we will have taken one step, and a long one, toward restoration of honour, honesty and clean business, social and political, conditions among ourselves. Speed the day!

The Vancouver Police Situation.

Mr. Robert G. Macpherson, as Police Commissioner, has given to the press an interview describing law enforcement conditions in Vancouver as revealed to him from confidential reports made to him as Commissioner.

In the press reports read by the writer, Mr. Macpherson made very conservative statements of the case and seemed quite anxious to avoid any improper reflections on the police force of the city.

Mayor Owen, whether moved to try and justify the present state of affairs in policedom and his administration as Mayor, or not, at once took the unnecessary step of calling a meeting for a "show-down," as he expressed it.

The "show-down" consisted in Chief Long stating he was doing his best, and Mr. Macpherson simply restating his position. A few errors in one press report were stated to be such. Apart from this unimportant fact, the "show-down" was a nullity reflecting neither credit on the Mayor's judgment nor contributing renown to his skill as a tactician.

Does Mayor Owen not consider it a farce to call a meeting to discuss what is a well known fact, viz., that law enforcement is in a very bad way in Vancouver?

It is not the intention of the writer to lay the blame of this situation wholly on the shoulders of Chief Long and his force. No fair minded man but must realize that permeating the whole situation are

elements that handicap the Vancouver police force and rob it of much of its efficiency. At the same time, it seems highly improbable that the force is not in a quite large measure to blame. Where the blame lies is not for the writer to say.

Of the major crimes in Vancouver two or three are admittedly unsolved. Several others, such as the City Hall, Capitol and one Bank hold-up, have been solved, not by the activities of the local police, but by the arrest of the wanted men in other cities for other crimes. The reported arrests and descriptions accompanying them went to identify the arrested ones with Vancouver crimes. Are the police of Vancouver to get credit for the arrest of these men? Assuredly not. Yet Chief Long points out that the majority of major crimes in Vancouver have been solved—yes, but by other forces.

Take the liquor situation. Can Mayor Owen be so ignorant of our conditions to-day as not to know that they are worse than they were in the old days of the open bar? Is there a city alderman, official, police or otherwise, who does not know this? Can Mayor Owen name any section of the business portion of Vancouver that is not alive with bootleggers of greater or lesser moment?

Why, then, this nonsensical "show-down"? Does Mayor Owen believe that any man moving around the city and at all cognizant of conditions, can be bluffed into believing himself mistaken as to what he sees and hears and knows by a City Hall love feast calculated to show that Chief Long and Mayor Owen think they are all right?

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