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A NARROW VIEW.

We had been accustomed to give Principal Grant credit for being a gentleman of progressive ideas; but after reading his criticism of the Postoffice department we are rather inclined to change our opinion. He appears to think that because the Postoffice annually expends for the service it provides a sum considerably larger than the money it receives it is "throwing good money away." Though we have not had the good fortune to be college reared, we have been always accustomed to regard the post office as an important medium not alone for the conduct of business but as a great factor in the education of the people, and as affording a service which not even the smallest community can afford to be without. It has been well remarked that many of the mail routes do not pay and that if the mails were carried on none but paying routes, a very considerable proportion of the population would be without mail accommodation. A settlement is no sooner formed than it wants a post office, and if it does not get one its growth is retarded, for people will not settle in a district which is destitute of postal conveniences. We might better dispense with some of those establishments such as Dr. Grant presides over—which do not directly benefit the masses—than be without extended postal facilities by which every one is advantaged.

TOLERABLY COMPREHENSIVE.

An omnibus sort of a charter is that which has been granted to the Wellington Investment and Improvement Company, which proposes "to erect, purchase, lease, equip, maintain, develop, work and manage manufactories, warehouses, breweries, distilleries, malt houses, hotels, places of amusement, pleasure grounds, pleasure yachts, boats and stage lines, and other works, building and conveniences which the company may think directly or indirectly conducive to these objects, and to contribute to or otherwise assist in the construction, maintenance, development and management thereof; harvest, buy, sell and manufacture ice at wholesale and retail, to deal generally in ice, both natural and artificial, and to utilize ice or other material for the purpose of cold storage; rent, acquire, sell, purchase and hold real estate in the Province of British Columbia, as may be deemed necessary and convenient for the purposes or profit of the company; and sell, improve, manage, develop, lease

mortgage, dispose of, turn to account or otherwise deal with all or any of the property or rights of the company."

Now, is not a franchise like this almost too much to grant to a concern with a capital stock of \$200,000? If not, it might possibly be just as well to further extend it so as to make it complete. We remember having read of a sign placed over a little cottage in a little hamlet in the Motherland, which read somewhat as follows:

"Bibles and Bacon,
Testaments and Treacle,
Godly Books and Gmlets
Sold Here."

Some of the businesses which are comprehended in the company's charter are but little less incongruous than are the articles dealt in by the country shopkeeper. "Godly Books and Gmlets" are a wide range, and no one will deny that with their contemplated \$200,000 capital Messrs. John A. Thompson, Andrew J. McMurrie, Edward Pat'en and Robert McManus have very extensive ideas with the idea, no doubt, of "striking it" somewhere. Is it advisable, we ask, to freight a newly launched vessel with such a cargo as the Wellington company wants to take on?

"THE COQUITLAM" CASE.

"What will they do with her?" is the question which is now puzzling the Americans in connection with the British Columbia steamer Coquitlam, which was seized by the U. S. authorities for an alleged violation of the customs law of that country in connection, it was charged, with the transfer of sealskins at or in the vicinity of Point Etches, Alaska. The steamer was, pending a final decision, released on bonds, but her owners, the Union Steamship Company, finding that they constituted a lien on their working plant that seriously interfered with their financial operations concluded to surrender her to the United States. Accordingly, on the 30th October the Coquitlam arrived at Port Townsend, where she was tied up, and the Collector of Customs, notified that she was at his disposal. Collector Saunders, fearing, as the local papers put it, that the object of the surrender was to still further complicate matters, declined to formally accept her, and telegraphed to Washington for instructions. He has yet had no reply, and, as to the outcome, it is believed, so the Port Townsend people say, that the vessel will have to proceed to the district of Sitka, where she was seized and subsequently released, and there be turned over to the collector. It is also said that an order from Judge Truitt, of Sitka, cancelling the bond, will also be necessary.

Meantime, this condition of uncertainty, this retention of the vessel at Port Townsend, without the U. S. Government vouchsafing instructions with regard to her is doing an injury and injustice to the Union Steamship Company who, though not American citizens, have rights which the Washington Government is bound to respect. They surrendered or attempted to surrender their vessel in good faith to the collector of customs at Port Townsend, the principal port of entry on the Sound, with the object of having the whole of the vessels of their fleet released from a lien

which in no way could be construed to be more than the value of the Coquitlam herself. Not only so, but the interminable delays in the way of securing a final and equitable judgment are such that there is no knowing when a decision may be reached. Justice is all that the Coquitlam's owners expect, but such delays in meeting the equities of the case constitute a veritable injustice which ought not to be possible. The question not unnaturally arises are these delays due merely to red tapeism and the requirements of the circumlocution office or are they caused by a deliberate and wilful desire on the part of the authorities at Washington to do the owners of the Coquitlam an injustice with the object, through them, of wreaking a petty spite on the British Columbia sealing interest?

COAL MINING.

The East Wellington coal mines have, many people will regret to hear, been closed permanently owing to the mine-owners and men being unable to agree as to the rate of remuneration. The quality of coal at East Wellington was good, but the seams were thin and, under existing conditions, the owners did not consider that they could give the miners better remuneration—as the New Vancouver Coal Company has done—than that provided by the reduction which went into effect several months since. The men, on being informed of this, struck, and the result is that they are altogether out of work. In regard to the miners' troubles in Great Britain, owing to the interposition of the Government, masters and men came together under the chairmanship of Lord Rosebery, the result being that work was resumed at the old wages on Monday, the terms to continue until February. The news was the signal for general rejoicing and thanksgiving services in the mining districts. Moreover, a Board of Conciliation under Government auspices has been formed which will hold its first meeting about the middle of December.

ESQUIMALT MARINE RAILWAY.

The Esquimalt Marine Railway Company Ltd., is composed of a number of Victoria gentlemen, with a capital of \$100,000, who propose to provide, by means of a marine railway upon which a vessel can be floated on a cradle and then hauled up high and dry, facilities for docking and repairing at half the cost of an ordinary dry docking. A track 700 feet long runs down into the water on a gradual slope. At the end of this track, which consists of six rails on which are anti-friction rollers, is a cradle 300 feet long and 55 feet wide, fitted with patent dropping keel blocks and bilge blocks. These are operated above the water by small winches on the side frame of the cradle, which carries a platform for operating. There is also an auxiliary piece to the cradle the railway easily handling vessels 300 feet long with a draft of 19 feet. Work on the new enterprise is satisfactorily progressing at Jones' landing near the Canteen grounds, Esquimalt, and before long something substantial will be seen as the result of what is being done.