

A MOST SERIOUS SITUATION.

We lay before our readers the following extremely candid letter received last evening by a well known Victoria gentleman from a young man who recently went north to the gold fields. We are assured by the recipient of the letter that the statements it contains (even those decidedly polite ones about the writer) are not to be trusted, as the writer is a man of unimpeachable integrity and has neither dyspepsia nor self-interest to sway his pen in describing things as they are in the northern towns:

Skagway, Alaska, March 10, 1898. Dear Sir, - At last we have arrived here after a pleasant journey (on the islander), the nicest journey I ever made on water, lots of music aboard, good victuals and a comfortable berth. Well, I saw Wrangell, a pretty muddy hole. Will fit for a human being to live in. The people there are disgusted; cannot move up the river on account of too much snow. Slush, Juneau is a nice town, as fast as Skagway, but they are all fast places. A man was shot and killed for his money out on the trail about seven miles from here. He was buried out there. The men that did the deed, of course, are at large. I have not seen a soldier since we landed. There is a hot town, pistol shots, every night. Well, for business, there is not a particle of snow here. The place is all mud and the river is breaking up. I guess by the looks of things, things are quite the reverse of what you have any idea of. We cannot move our goods. Our customs is all upset. We have to get a broker to secure our bonds for us at 25 per cent, and now we have to pay a convey to carry our goods. I see \$6 a day, and I guess before we get the summit my money will be exhausted, for to pay a man a day to add catch stormy weather money won't last long. It is all very well to read newspapers, but as I say and have told newspapers, I do not get one item of news. It is raining hard; we shall have to get our stuff hauled to where we can get the spring, so as to get over the summit as soon as we can. Talk about getting any duty refunded, you don't get a thing refunded. We have to go to the customs office this morning, and I guess we will move in the afternoon, even if it is raining, for I don't want any of this town. Am in good health and so are the boys. I see three men here I knew well, and I saw lots in Wrangell. The place and climate are a good deal better than Skagway. I will write you again as soon as possible. The islander left last night, so I cannot tell you where they will get this.

Yours truly, S. C. P. (Signed.) The statement made about the customs is really most disquieting, and the Board of Trade might do well to take up the matter at once and notify the Ottawa authorities. It is quite clear the American officials are determined refusing to carry out the orders of their government, and are subjecting Canadian travellers to the grossest injustice. It is simply monstrous that this state of things should longer be tolerated; if it is not stopped the most grievous damage will be done to the British Columbia cities. We can assure our readers that the foregoing letter is a reproduction of the actual facts, therefore any action in protest that may be contemplated-but it should not be contemplated, but taken immediately-will be quite warranted. It is absolutely necessary that the obstinate American customs officials at Skagway and Summit should be compelled to their duty by the British Canadian travellers. As for the writer's statement about the newspapers, the Victoria Colonist and the Vancouver World, with their deliberate falsifications, bushings up, and other attempts to blind the travelling public are solely to blame. They are on a level with the Sound papers, and lay the blame on the pursued a course of dishonesty, and downright stupidity. But the efforts of those journals can be dismissed with the contempt they deserve; the main point is that the most serious injustice is being done to Canadians going over the Summit, and all hands should unite to have this grievance redressed without delay. Every day lost is so much more damage done to the vital interests of the province.

TREACHEROUS AND CRIMINAL.

That candid philanthropist, of blessed memory, the late Mr. W. H. Vanderbilt of New York, never in his long and self-useful life carried more boldly into practice his own famous maxim: "The public be damned." In the Turner government have put it into practice in forcing through the legislature that most atrocious and cowardly resolution against the Kettle River Railway bill. Thereby, that miserable gang of blunderers proved themselves traitors to the province that is putting up with their abominable stupidity and extravagance, and fools as well to their duty, they ought to face the country after battering that resolution through the house? It will be the most damning piece of evidence against them at the elections. There is no mystery about the cause which led up to the spineless government of British Columbia finding the boldness at a most critical juncture of their history, to fly deliberately, we must believe, against the wishes, most emphatically expressed, of the people of the upper country. We shall soon make clear that cause. The resolution was rushed through the house by brute force and upon pretexts, brazen in their illogicality, so unassailable and impotent that a footpad might as well offer a reason for robbing the poor man might wish to use them. Here, then is the reason why the weak, vacillating and unworthy Turner administration came by enough stiffening to pass a resolution that certainly took some resolution to pass, for it is not in them to have done this, knowing that the whole upper country would thereby be rendered irreconcilably hostile and would take the opportunity soon to be afforded of expressing their detestation, resentment and disgust at the conduct of the James Bay gang. The almighty C.P.R., with its admirably magnificent push into every corner of Canada its splendid diplomatic, as well as commercial, its trained and skilful emissaries everywhere; at the federal capital, at every town, river in the Dominion, its almighty, monopolistic C.P.R. octopus had something to do with making the invertebrate Turner ministry act as if they had really a spine. The C.P.R. are in Victoria now, and have had for some

months back, off and on, a representative capable of hypnotizing the Turner ministry in a most effective way by can twist and bend that business body as a master potter shapes the moist and plastic clay. His name is Geo. McL. Brown, plenipotentiary of the C.P.R. at the capital of the province the C.P.R. want to keep as a preserve for their own operations. Physically, Mr. Brown is a Colossus; compared with the members of the Turner administration, intellectually, too. suave and polished of manner, persuasive of speech, no mean diplomatist, knowing the Turner ministry as a student of human nature soon gets to know them, Mr. Brown is a man who can improve an opportunity. He justifies the acute judgment of his chiefs in choosing him to shape the pliant Turner ministry to their purposes. He has done his work well; he has infused something of courage and determination into a government no one ever suspected of possessing such qualities; he has even made them appear, temporarily, intelligent, and as if they possessed some mind of their own. Sir William Van Horne and Mr. Shaughnessy at Ottawa; Mr. G. McL. Brown at Victoria, who has the chances of the Kettle River Railway bill?

Mr. Brown would seem to have taken the jellyfish ministry at James Bay as he might take a shapeless lump of soft clay, moulded it into definite form, useful for his purpose. The Turner ministry have thereby earned a "hiding infamy"; politicians and voters alike, blockheads are the least violent of the epithets they may expect to hear from the electors when the electors have a chance to meet them. The Turner ministry have proved inexplicably stupid, not to impute anything more serious to them; they and their servile tail of animated marionettes have disgraced the province. How long will the people of British Columbia put up with the outrageous unfaithfulness of the Turner gang? It is the marvel of outsiders that they have tolerated such a band of noodles so long. The people must wake up on this province will fall into the hands of land-grabbers, speculators, monopolists and jobbers. The affair of the Kettle River Railway resolution should make them realize they are ten times ahead of British Columbia unless the people shake off their sloth and apathy and take an interest in their public affairs.

THE STIKINE ROUTE.

Time, the limitations of space, common sense, regard for the patience and feelings of our readers, without an extended reply to the farrago of virulent impertinence with which the Colonist disgraces its editorial columns this morning regarding our position on the Stikine route question. If the editor of that paper would go among the people, the merchants, and hear them discuss the matter he would learn a few things that would be a most instructive and awful exhibition he has been making of himself. We have already exposed his motives in filling the Colonist with highly colored and, wilfully misleading statements about the Stikine. Does the gentleman imagine he will be accepted as a disinterested advocate? Does he delude himself with the idea that malicious, palpably malicious, destruction of the Times and wanton misrepresentation of the Times' attitude will hoodwink the Victoria public? Can he be so foolish as to believe that the Victoria public are such bumpkins as to think his fine words better any passings? The editor of the Colonist is a paid claqueur, the tool of a company of desperadoes who regard him as an editor for the mean hire paid him by the company. He should hold his peace about "playing into the hands of aliens"; his unblushing sacrifice of the real interests of Victoria for the purposes of the company is too well understood. The Colonist mentions the Vancouver World in the connection. What do we care about the opinion of the Vancouver World? Nothing; and we never met anybody who cared anything about them. The Colonist is getting reckless of its reputation.

WILL LEASE TO THE C.P.R.

The Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway and Navigation Company was formed for the purpose of building a railway from the coast to Kootenay. The proposed road was to be independent of the C.P.R., and the project received the support of the British Columbia coast cities largely on that account. The V. V. & E. has a provincial charter and expects a provincial subsidy. At the present session of the Dominion Parliament a bill will probably become law declaring the proposed railway to be for the general advantage of Canada, and authorizing the operation of the railway act. This will give the road a Dominion status and make it possible for the government-whenever they feel so disposed-to grant it a Dominion subsidy. That it will receive a Dominion subsidy is, however, far from certain; indeed, it may be stated positively that there is not the slightest chance that it will receive aid from the Dominion during the present session, whatever success its promoters may have next year, or the year after, in subsidy-hunting. The government will not subsidize any railways this year, a policy which, although it will be unpopular in certain localities, will be approved by the majority generally. We say generally, and having in mind the great things we expected from the Coast-Kootenay railway, which the Times advocated strenuously and consistently, that the refusal of a Dominion subsidy will not be received with so much disfavor as it would have been had the original independent character of the road been maintained, and thus some guarantee have been continued that the great trade of the Kootenay country would be assured of the benefits of a competing line. This hope may now be abandoned since all claim to "independence" was practically relinquished when the V. V. & E. applied for power to lease its works of any part thereof to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company on such terms and conditions-and the subsidy promise is agreed upon between the directors of the said companies. The original object of the road has been lost sight of, and the promoters can no longer claim that they are going to provide a competing line between the coast cities and Kootenay.

BOUNDLESS IMPUDENCE.

There never was a more extraordinary measure put before any legislature in the British Empire than the one which is now before the House of Commons under the name of the Northwest Railway bill. This is a measure designed to throw a blanket charter over pretty nearly the whole eastern and northeastern portions of the province, and it is so elastic that it can be made to accommodate any development that may take place almost anywhere within the province. The provisions of the bill make really humorous reading, giving as they do permission to the promoters, when the spirit moves them, to go on to anywhere and everywhere. The conduct of the government in attempting to shove the bill through was highly characteristic, and all that was to be expected. There is for the electors a vast amount of food for thought in the provisions of this astounding measure. The very fact that such a bill could be brought before the house is sufficiently alarming evidence that the comprehensive grasp of the greedy speculator and the professional charter-monger is on the vitals of the province-but in the fact that the Turner government actually have the assurance to attempt to push this disgraceful bill through the house through the grace of the jellyfish ministry at James Bay is not more than the truth to say that British Columbia at the present moment is looked upon by every schemer as his peculiar stamping ground, and the Turner government as one of the "great powers" of the world. It is pleasant, indeed, for the people of British Columbia to realize that their province is little better than the happy hunting ground of those enterprising and unscrupulous gentry, and their government looked upon as the easy prey of every quick-witted promoter who sets his mind on a desirable section of the country.

CRIMINAL LIBEL ON THE PACIFIC COAST.

We publish below an extract from a paper read before the Canadian Press Association last week by Mr. J. King, Q.C., upon the subject of newspaper libel in this province. The speaker, Mr. King, is a member of the Toronto, the standing counsel of the Press Association, and he has made the law of libel a special study, and is a recognized authority upon such matters. The now famous proceedings instituted by the Hon. Messrs. Turner and Pooley against the publishers and editors of the Province and Times, and the editor of Mr. King's own paper, the Vancouver World, are mentioned in the paper. It is interesting to read the opinion of a gentleman so well qualified to speak and who has no interest in the case other than to see that the administration of the law is not permitted to degenerate into a farce. Mr. King said:

"Turning for a moment to some recent cases, the position of the original law of libel, there is one case to which, for obvious reasons, only a brief reference can be made. The prosecution for libel instituted against the publishers of the British Columbia government against several gentlemen connected in various ways with the government, and the publication at Victoria, B. C., promises to be a cause celebre. The proceedings so far have been of a preliminary character, but the extent of the libel is such that none of the defendants were permitted to defend themselves. The libel, as alleged, is contained in the two honorable gentlemen, at whose instance, presumably, the complaint was laid, were called upon to defend themselves, and were interrogated in support of the plea of justification, but the questions were objected to and were disallowed by the presiding magistrates. The stenographic report of the hearing, published in the Province, does not state the reasons for the disallowance of the alleged libel. The two honorable gentlemen, at whose instance, presumably, the complaint was laid, were called upon to defend themselves, and were interrogated in support of the plea of justification, but the questions were objected to and were disallowed by the presiding magistrates. The stenographic report of the hearing, published in the Province, does not state the reasons for the disallowance of the alleged libel. The two honorable gentlemen, at whose instance, presumably, the complaint was laid, were called upon to defend themselves, and were interrogated in support of the plea of justification, but the questions were objected to and were disallowed by the presiding magistrates. The stenographic report of the hearing, published in the Province, does not state the reasons for the disallowance of the alleged libel. 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