The Colonist.

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THE SEMI-WEEKLY COLONIST

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AN INTERESTING PROPOSAL.

The proposal made by the Revelstoke Board of Trade that the government shall assist in providing a traffic route from that city to Tete Jaune Cache, is certainly very interesting. In the report of the meeting between the executive and representatives of the above board and also those of Vancouver and Victoria, a very full statement of the case is given, so it is not necessary to more than summarize the facts here. The object of the proposed route is two-fold. First and principally it is to enable British Columbia business houses to supply the commodities which will be used in the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific between and including the Rocky Mountain section and Fort George; and to make Revelstoke the point from which supplies will be sent in and the headquarters of travel of those engaged in the work of construction. Secondly, the object is to open a valuable portion of the Province. While Revelstoke is to be the starting point of this proposed route, the whole of British Columbia is interested in it, because the contractors will buy their supplies in the province and the men, when they are paid off, will spend their money in our cities, provided the anticipations of those who are promoting the project are realized. Revelstoke is very much nearer the section of the railway above mentioned than is Edmonton which will be the headquarters and point of supply unless the trade can be brought to this province.

A brief topographical description of the district may be useful. Every one familiar with the map of British Columbia knows that the Columbia river rising not very far north of the Crow's Nest Pass, flows northwesterly along the western slope of the Rocky Mountains until it receives the waters of Canoe River flowing in from the north, when it swings southward in a great bend and crosses the Canadian Pacific for a second time at Revelstoke. Canoe River rises very near to the headwaters of the Fraser in Yellow Head Pass. The Columbia is navigable from Revelstoke to the mouth of the Canoe, with a single interruption, and the Canoe is also navigable for a considerable distance. There is thus navigable water from Revelstoke to within a comparatively short distance of the route of the Grand Trunk Pacific with the single break mentioned, and it is said that the Dominion government will build or aid in building a tramway around this obstruction. As there is open country between the head of navigation on the Canoe river and the Fraser, it seems very natural that the river route should be utilized for transportation purposes in preference to any other, if the necessary roads are made over those parts where water is not available. The Columbia is navigable for six months in the year and the Canoe for about three. It is necessary, therefore, if transportation is to be kept up all the year round, to provide for six months traffic in the Columbia valley, for nine months in the Canoe valley and for the whole twelvemonths between the head of navigation on the latter river and Tete Jaune Cache in the Fraser valley.

The proposal is that the government shall assist in building a road suitable for traffic at all seasons of the year from the mouth of the Canoe River to Tete Jaune Cache, a distance of 35 miles, and that it shall provide a sleigh road for use in the winter from Revelstoke to the mouth of the Canoe River, a distance of 90 miles. The estimated cost of the work is $100,000, which probably may be an underestimate. Towards the cost the people of Revelstoke have already subscribed $12,000, and it is said that the railway contractors will contribute very liberally, because it will be greatly in their interest to secure the shortest and cheapest means of transportation from railway communications to the scene of their operations. Hence the government is not asked to pay all the cost of the proposed roads.

In addition to the advantage which it is claimed will flow from the business developed in connection with the construction of the railway, it is pointed out that there are valuable timber areas in the district through which the road would run that will be shortly utilized; that the mica mines, of which much has been said in the past, will be developed if transportation is provided, that there is a good deal of farming land in the Canoe valley that will be occupied as soon as it is made accessible, and that under any circumstances it can only be the matter of a very few years before a highway will have to be built to connect the Grand Trunk Pacific with the Columbia. Another consideration suggests itself to us which was not mentioned at yesterday's meeting. In the event of the mines of the Finlay River proving as valuable as there is reason to expect, the proposed route would be far and away the best means of getting supplies into the country. They could be taken to the Canoe River by steamer, thence by wagon to the Fraser and down the Fraser to Giscombe Portage, where a short land haul would take them into the Parsnip down which they could be transported in small boats to the mouth of the Finlay.

It is argued that in addition to the considerations above advanced the government must recognize the fact that in a very short time it will have to provide the facilities now asked, and therefore it is wise to contribute towards them now when the co-operation of the people of Reveistoke and of the railway contractors can be secured to reduce to the lowest possible figure the charge upon the provincial exchequer. It is claimed that unless the route is opened the trade created by the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific in the Fraser valley will go to Edmonton, instead of coming to British Columbia and the estimated cost of the construction of the part of the railway referred to is put at $16,000,000.

We think there will be general agreement with the claim that, if the government is satisfied as to the correctness of the facts as above set out, and that the contractors will contribute in due proportion to the cost of the road and agree to buy their supplies in the province, as far as it is practicable from a business point of view, an appropriation towards the establishment of the proposed transportation route would be acceptable to the people of the province, and will be money well expended. Speaking for ourselves, we shall be very glad if the government can see its way to give reasonable assistance. At the same time we recognize that we have as yet heard only one side of the case, and we do not know what guarantees can be given as to what the contractors will do in the way of contributing to the cost of the work and in the purchase of supplies in British Columbia. These are matters into which the members of the executive will have to look very carefully. From what was said at yesterday's meeting it is safe to assume that the government will approach the consideration of the case with a favorable mind. The ministers will doubtless weigh all the considerations advanced in favor of the proposal, and, as in duty bound, will have to see what tenable objections can be advanced. It is somewhat of a formidable proposition to be advanced on very short notice, but this of itself is no reason why it should not be taken up and determined on its merits. We suggest that the people of Revelstoke and all others directly interested in this undertaking should strengthen their case by securing immediately the strongest possible assurances from intending contractors.

THE TERCENTENARY.

Mr. Mackenzie King's address at the Canadian Club luncheon Monday dealt with the tercentenary of the landing of Champlain at Quebec, which is to be appropriately observed during the present summer. His speech was one of unusual eloquence and interest, and although it dealt with a subject which is happily becoming more and more familiar to Canadians generally, as the years roll round, it was a timely reminder to those present of the great significance of Canadian history. The club is to be congratulated upon the theme chosen by their guest, and he himself upon the exceptionally able manner in which he dealt with it.

Canadians think altogether too little about the history of their country, but this is not surprising because it is an exceptionally difficult thing to introduce new factors into an educational system. Efforts more or less successful, have been made to teach Canadian history in the schools, but it will necessarily take some time before our own people appreciate its proper place in the records of the world. One reason is that literature and tradition deal very little with the early years of Canada, for although there are many books relating to it, and Dr. Francis Parkman has given us a series of prose poems on the subject, Canadian history has not yet been popularized. Undoubtedly the celebration at Quebec will stimulate interest in that direction. It can hardly fail to teach English-speaking Canadians something of what they owe to the founders of Quebec.

A very essential thing at the present time in the Dominion is the promotion of a better appreciation of the part which the French population have played in making possible a great British nationality upon this continent. Sometimes we hear people speak as though the French element of the population ought to be looked upon as intruders, whose peculiar sentiments might very properly be disregarded. This is specially the case with people, who have not been very long in the country, who indeed cannot be expected to know very much about the facts of Canadian history. To some of these it seems intolerable that there should be any recognition of the French as such, and they take the position that the traditions and sentiments of Quebec ought, as far as possible, to be ignored. Now that the number of newcomers is rapidly growing, it is of the highest importance that the position and claims of Quebec should be rightly understood. It is difficult to see how, as population increases, the French-speaking element can hope to maintain the same relative influence that it now has. It seems almost inevitable that the peculiarities which distinguish Quebec from the other provinces will in the course of time become in a measure obliterated; but the changes will be brought about by natural selection. The legal rights of the French minority will never be interfered with. The laws, language and religion, as preserved by the original Quebec Act, will not for many years to come be affected materially by legislation. The changes that take place will be such as the convenience of the people dictates. This being the case, it is exceedingly important that Quebec should be well understood by the people of Canada, and in so far as the Tercentenary shall contribute to this result, its effect will be lasting and beneficial.

Mr. King spoke of the proposed popular subscriptions towards the purchase of the battlefields, and mentioned what is being accomplished by the Canadian Clubs and the schools in other parts of Canada. Very little has yet been done in this way in British Columbia. The government had given $10,000, but this ought to be supplemented by private subscription. The fact that a record is to be kept of all contributions to the fund is interesting and valuable. There may come a time when it will be of importance to some one to refer to this list for private reasons. It will be a sort of Canadian Domesday Book, only far more comprehensive than Domesday was. There is no comprehensive list in America of the names of the people, except of course the directories and those as a rule only include the names of men. Those persons, who for one reason or another have been called upon to investigate American genealogies, know how useful would have been such a list as will be preserved in the Museum to be established at Quebec. Much time and money have been expended in fruitless researches to determine if certain persons were alive at certain dates in the past in the brief history of North America. The difficulty of making such investigations is only known to those who have made them. It is worth a small subscription to have one's name handed down to a posterity that some day may want to know it. This is putting the desirability of subscribing to the fund on a very narrow ground. The real motive ought to be a desire to aid in commemorating the founding of Canada and the series of glorious events that has made not only the Dominion, but the British Empire possible.

TARIFF REFORM

Those Canadians who discuss tariff reform in the United Kingdom usually take it for granted that a protective tariff in the Mother Country will necessarily imply a preference to Colonial products. But this is by no means certain, or rather the latter will not necessarily be the outcome of the former. It is true that without a general tariff on imports the United Kingdom cannot give the outlying parts of the Empire any preference in her markets, and hence some degree of protection must precede any general system of inter-imperial preference. Mr. Chamberlain's plan involved both and in moving a resolution on the subject in the House of Lords a couple of weeks ago, the Duke of Marlborough treated the two things as associated, but as Lord Cromer pointed out in the same debate the "scientific" principle upon which customs schedules are made out in Australia, Canada and elsewhere preclude the possibility of any one's saying in advance how a system of preference can be passed that will be mutually acceptable. It would not be difficult to provide that there shall be a certain duty on breadstuffs imported into the United Kingdom, but that such articles raised within the Empire should be duty free. We would like that in Canada very much. We would also like very much a similar arrangement in respect to timber and other articles; but a little consideration will show that while a duty on foreign wheat might stimulate the growth of wheat at home, and the admission of wheat grown within the Empire free of duty might prevent the cost of bread being raised to the British consumer, a duty on foreign timber with Canadian timber admitted free might raise the cost of timber to the British consumer, because it is quite unlikely that there would be any increase in the domestic supply of timber used in the United Kingdom. It would be easy to justify to the agricultural class the desirability of putting a duty on breadstuffs, but it would not be so easy to justify to any one the propriety of putting a duty on timber. When we take up manufactured articles the problem becomes still further complicated. Therefore while tariff reform is a simple enough thing, taken by itself, tariff reform combined with imperial preference is a matter of some difficulty. It would be possible to provide that any duties imposed should be subject to a reduction of a certain percentage where the goods were the produce of British countries, but in view of the complicated tariffs of the several parts of the Empire one can hardly undertake to say with any degree of certainty just how this would work out; we mean, of course, so far as the United Kingdom is concerned, and naturally the people of that country must first consider how any proposed fiscal changes will affect themselves. In the debate above mentioned Viscount Milner made a powerful argument in favor of the preference, or, as he expressed it, imperial reciprocity, and he claimed that if some sacrifice were involved therein, which he denied, it would be worth it, because of "the permanent advantage to British workmen and British merchants in supplying the needs of the other portions of the British Empire, with all the enormous industrial future that is in store for them." He also enlarged upon the political and moral effects of the development of inter-Imperial commerce.

The London Times is disposed to consider the most important contribution to the debate was the speech of Viscount St. Aldwyn, who was formerly Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. He began his observations in the following words:

We have just listened to the speech of a thorough-going free-trader, and last night we had a very eloquent speech from the noble viscount on the cross benches as a thorough-going advocate of the other side. I have need of your lordships' indulgence, because I confess I feel myself unable to agree with the thorough-going partisans on either side, and the negative policy of the government is not one of which I can approve. I have the strongest desire, for political rather than commercial reasons, that something should be done towards increasing and improving the commercial relations between the Mother Country and the Colonies. To obtain that result I should not shrink from departing from the strict theory of free trade if I were satisfied that the departure would stop there. On the other hand, I by no means feel the confidence which the noble duke and the noble viscount who spoke last appear to feel in the policy of colonial preference. I think it is true, as Lord Cromer said last night, that the policy of colonial preference has been tried by this country in the past without satisfactory results. There seem to me practical difficulties of the graver kind in the way of the adoption of that policy now.

The observation of Lord Cromer, to which reference is made in the quotation, was in regard to the trade relations between the Mother Country and the Colonies prior to the repeal of the Trade and Navigation Laws in 1846. It may, therefore, be useful to quote Lord Cromer's words on that point. He said:

The present generation appear almost to have forgotten that this system of according preference to the Colonies was tried for a long series of years, and was finally abandoned in the year 1845. If anybody wishes to know the results obtained under that system he cannot do better than study the report of the Committee on Import Duties presented to the other House of Parliament in the year 1840. The economic results were deplorable. The British timber merchants were unable to procure cheap foreign timber from foreign countries, and had to supply themselves at a higher rate in Canada. Moreover, the duty was evaded on all sides. Wood from Sweden and Norway was sent to Canada and came back to this country as Canadian produce, so as to escape the duty. In the same way coffee used to be sent from Brazel to the Cape and then came into this country as a product of the Cape. The committee reported that the system gave rise to endless complaints and vexations, and it was finally abandoned. What were the political results? They were no more satisfactory than the economic results. It surely can hardly be a coincidence that the period of preferential treatment of the Colonies constituted also the most palmy days of the Little Englander as he is now called. Mr. Cobden, whose name appears now to act as a red rag to a bull to many people in this country, was by no means the Little Englander of that period. Far from it. No less a person than Lord Beaconsfield, who afterwards became the pillar of modern imperialism, spoke of the Colonies in 1852 as being millstones round the neck of the Mother Country. Similar references to them were frequently made by statesmen of that period. Neither can this be a matter of surprise, for the interests of every class in this country, and more especially the commercial class, suffered by being unable to obtain articles of produce suitable for their wants at cheap rates from foreign countries, and from being obliged to pay dearer rates in the Colonies. The natural result ensued. They chafed under the Colonial connection, and the further result was endless friction and the birth of Little Englandism in a somewhat extreme form. I cannot help thinking that a similar system would produce similar results at present. Indeed, the risk that these results would be produced is perhaps even greater now than 60 years ago. Everybody knows that at periods of electoral excitement the standard of veracity in this country sinks to a somewhat low ebb. I confess as a sound Imperialist I should look forward with little satisfaction to a general election taking place where every platform in the country would ring with the statement that the dear loaf was due to the sacrifices made for our fellow-subjects in the Colonies. Would such a contingency strengthen the bonds of union with the Colonies? It appears to me that it would produce the very opposite result.

Lord St. Aldwyn said he was unable to see how a policy of reciprocity with foreign countries could be worked out in connection with a Colonial preference, and he thought the treaty, which Canada has just negotiated with France, shows the impracticability of combining the two plans. He said that the small duties, proposed to be put on breadstuffs, afforded no margin for a preference that would be worth anything. He recognized that the protectionist idea is gaining ground throughout the country, and thought it not impossible that after the next general election a government might be in power, which would have to deal with it. He said that when a change was attempted it would be found surrounded with difficulties, but he hoped it would be entered upon not for sentimental reasons only, but with a desire to place the relations of the Colonies to the Mother Country upon a business basis, and one that would be permanent. Concluding his speech he said:

I think all of us would agree that if there should be a change in the policy of this country in this matter it ought to be made so that it should last. It ought to be made, therefore, on the basis of a sentiment and a deep and real conviction of the great majority of the people of this country. A mere flitting party majority, returned perhaps upon grounds quite of another nature to the subject we are discussing tonight, may make such a change; but if it should make it, and if within a very short time the next House of Commons should come determined to reverse it at the earliest opportunity, well then, I can only say that that would not be, in my opinion, an act of statesmanship; it would be an act almost of treason to the maintenance of those ties of affection and goodwill between the Mother Country and the Colonies which all of us desire. (Cheers.)

THE U.S. PRESIDENCY.

Twenty-five men have been President of the United States, namely: Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Adams, Jackson, Van Buren, Harrison, Tyler, Polk, Taylor, Fillmore, Pierce, Buchanan, Lincoln, Johnson, Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Cleveland, Harrison, McKinley, Roosevelt. Five of them were elected Vice-President and took office on the death of the President, namely: Tyler, Fillmore, Johnson, Arthur, Roosevelt. One of these, Roosevelt, was afterwards elected President. Two of them, the first Adams and Van Buren, served as Vice-President before being elected President. Five died in office, namely, the first Harrison, Taylor, Lincoln, Garfield and McKinley. The last three of these were murdered. One President, Washington, was by profession a surveyor; three, the first Harrison, Taylor and Grant, were soldiers; two, Fillmore and Johnson, were tailors, although the former became a lawyer. One, Roosevelt, had no special profession, but was a writer. The others were lawyers. Seven, namely, Washington, Jackson, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Harrison and McKinley became soldiers. Nine of them were twice elected President, namely, Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Lincoln, Grant, Cleveland and McKinley. One, Cleveland, was elected to a second term after being defeated at an intervening election. One, President Johnson, was unmarried. The oldest President at the time of his taking office was William Henry Harrison, who was 68; the youngest was Roosevelt, who was 42. Seven of the Presidents were born British subjects, namely, Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, John Quincy Adams and Jackson. Van Buren was born during the Revolution. Seven were born in Virginia, namely, Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, W. H. Harrison, Tyler, Taylor; five in Ohio, namely, Grant, Hayes, Garfield, B. Harrison, McKinley; three in New York, namely, Van Buren, Fillimore, Roosevelt; three in North Carolina, namely, Jackson, Polk, Johnson; the two Adamses were born in Massachussetts; Pierce was born in New Hampshire; Buchanan in Pennsylvania; Lincoln in Kentucky; Arthur in Vermont and Cleveland in New Jersey.

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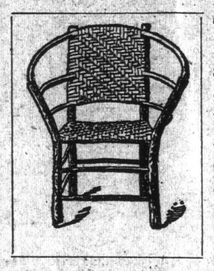

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