The Colonist.

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POLITICAL ISSUES.

In the course of his somewhat notable speech in the House of Commons last week, Mr. Clifford Sifton declared himself strongly in favor of getting out of old political ruts and discussing the broader questions involved in Canadian public affairs. With this all people will agree. In a country like ours, where there is so much to be done, it is unfortunate that so much of the energy of public men should be dissipated in the ventilation of scandals, real or imaginary, and the refreshing of old straw. The responsibility rests largely upon the government. There will always be men in public life who will have a keen eye for fly-specks and be unable to see anything larger; but it ought to be possible for a government, and especially one supported by such a majority as the present one has in the House of Commons, to carry on affairs in a manner that would defy any reasonable criticism. He would be a rash friend who would undertake to claim that the Laurier ministry has done this. Recently there was a prolonged session of the House, arising out of the refusal of a minister to bring down certain information. It is a recognized principle in our politics if a minister of the crown states in his place in parliament that it is not desirable, in the public interest, to make public certain facts, to accept the assurance in good faith, but no such question was involved in the refusal mentioned. It was simply a case of stubbornness on the part of a minister, who, as a matter of fact, as it subsequently transpired, had nothing on the particular subject which he could have wished to conceal. Before the Committee of Public Accounts there has been much heated debate as to the production of papers, and refusals which seemed arbitrary. We do not claim that the Opposition are always reasonable. Doubtless they, like Ministerialists, are not always influenced by a desire to promote the public welfare, and sometimes make a fight for the sake of fighting. But the government has things in its own hands. It can prevent obstruction in the House by bringing down all information that can properly be given; it can assist instead of hampering the work of the Committee on Public Accounts. Above all things, it ought to be able to carry on the details of administration so that there would be nothing to conceal. By its failure along the above lines, the present administration has lowered the tone of Canadian politics and made the issues chiefly those in which common honesty and ordinary business sense are involved, rather than those larger questions which Mr. Sifton thinks ought to occupy our attention.

WHAT'S IN A NAME.

We have been asked to take exception to the attempted monopoly of the word "American" by our neighbors south of the Forty-ninth parallel. When we expressed a desire to be told what we ought to call those nameless folk, the title Unitedstatesers was suggested, but this seems open to the objection that the terminal "er" is rarely used to express origin or locality. It is true that we sometimes say Hollanders, but a better name for the same people is Dutch. We of the English tongue find the termination "ese" very useful, and use it in connection with the people of China, Japan, Siam, Java, Soudan and other countries. So also is the termination "an," which does duty for Canadians, Russians, Prussians, Germans, and a host of others. In other cases, as those of the English, Irish, Scots, French, Danes, Swedes and so on, we go back to the original race name. In these cases the country is named after the people, not the people after the country. Thus we call a certain country Turkey, because the Turks live there, and the Turks brought their name with them from Turkestan, but whether they were named after that land or the land was named after them, we cannot get back far enough in history to find out. But all these rules of nomenclature fail when we come to deal with the people of the United States. Sir Richard Webster suggested that they should call themselves Usonians, but the idea did not take. After Theodore I. came to the throne, it was decreed that all the United States consulates should be called American consulates, and if we are not mistaken, the word American is applied to the embassies of that country. The only people, except ourselves, who could raise any reasonable objection to this, are those of the Mother Country, and they seem to have acquiesced very readily in the usurpation. So now we hear of the American flag and the American navy and other American things, which would not be so objectionable if we did not also hear of the American Continent, which it is not by any manner of means. We would like to be able to do something about the matter, but are not clear what there is to be done. At one time there seemed to be a chance of the name Yankee, which is a corruption of English, being adopted by our neighbors, but the Southern states would have none of it. Yet it is just as good a name as any other. It doubtless originated in an attempt by the Indians to pronounce the French word l'Anglais, and it was once a pretty good name to conjure with among the people who were the real founders and preservers of the American union. But it does not sound very aristocratic, and now it is looked upon almost as a term of reproach. It is, however, a name which our neighbors ought to feel proud of. It is just as good as Japanese, which is not the name of the people of the Oriental empire anyway, but a perversion of it. However, nothing so short, classical and expressive as the word "Yankee" would satisfy our neighbors, so we can see no way out of the dilemma. Perhaps Theodore the Strenuous may bring it to pass that his empire will be called America, and we will find another name for the Continent. "A rose by any other name," etc.

NAVAL DEFENCE

Resuming the consideration of Canada's contribution to the defence of the Empire on the sea, we take the position that the objections, real or imaginary, to a direct contribution in money do not by any means absolve the Dominion of responsibility in the premises. No matter what may be done in other directions, and the Colonist is second to none in claiming that full justice shall be accorded Canadians in this matter by their critics, it seems to be indisputable that something should be done directly for the navy. It has been proposed that the Dominion should offer to pay for a battleship, but that seems a perfunctory sort of thing. Our contribution to the defence of the Empire ought to have some relation to our place in that Empire. What we do ought, we submit, to be done in Canada. We might very properly provide upon both coasts of the Dominion facilities for the docking of the largest of the Imperial ships. If a battleship or first-class cruiser should be injured in the defence of Canada's coast, we have no dock into which she could go for repairs. Surely it is not unreasonable that such facilities should be provided. In the granting of subsidies to steamship lines they might well be made liberal upon the condition that the ships should be of a class approved by the Admiralty and be available for use in the event of hostilities. We could maintain on both coasts a squadron for ocean police duty. At short intervals we hear of the smaller vessels of the Royal navy being sent to points in the new world to protect British interests. Canada might well undertake this duty. In short we might very properly have a Canadian navy that would be serviceable in peace and useful in war.

We believe the people of Canada would sanction such a policy, if it were formulated on a moderate scale. The people generally are not satisfied that the country shall continue to do nothing towards the naval defence of the Empire, and they are not satisfied with the plausible excuses given for inaction. What is needed is a Premier who will take up the question fearlessly. The elections could be carried on such an issue. By this we do not mean that if Mr. Borden should make this the leading plank of his platform, he could achieve success, on that issue alone as Leader of the Opposition, but that if Sir Wilfrid Laurier, or any other leader of a government would ask the people for the endorsation of such a policy it would be given with enthusiasm from one end of the country to the other. If we are a nation, we ought to assume some of a nation's responsibilities.

THE HORSE SHOW.

The Vancouver Horse Show appears to have been a complete success. One or two Victoria people have complained that the press of the mainland city seemed to be careful to avoid any references to exhibits as coming from Victoria, but that is only one of the examples of the "village idea" which are too frequently observable on the part of some of our Vancouver contemporaries. We have heard very little adverse criticism as to the manner in which the show was conducted; in fact only one matter has been mentioned which seems to call for comment. It is that "equipment" in driving horses was scored at 40. This seems somewhat high. It is, of course, very desirable that exhibitors should have some inducements to show their horses to handsome carriages, and well harnessed, but if the object of a horse show is to encourage the breeding of good animals, we think the percentage mentioned is too high. We fancy that most horsemen will agree with us in this. A good horseman looks at the horse, and while he likes to see a good horse in a good harness and hitched to a good vehicle, the horse to him is a good deal more than sixty per cent of the outfit. But this only in passing. All who visited the show speak loudly in praise of it, and we very heartily congratulate the management and the city of Vancouver upon the success of what we suppose may be looked upan as an annual afair. Everything that will encourage the breeding of good animals and the proper care of them afterwards deserves hearty public approval. We have not yet reached the "horseless age," and it is probably yet a long way off.

THE ADMIRALTY COURT

The proposal of the Minister of Justice to abolish the Admiralty Court and confer jurisdiction in admiralty upon the judges of the Supreme Courts of the several provinces is not regarded at all favorably in the East. Even so pronounced a supporter of the government as the Halifax Chronicle protests against it. In the course of a lengthy article on the subject, the Chronicle says:

We are informed that the Shipping Federation of Eastern Canada, composed of the agents or managers of the transatlantic shipping interests of Eastern Canada, has pronounced against the proposed change. The Board of Trade and La Chambre de Commerce, representing respectively all the vast commercial interests of Montreal; the Board of Trade of Quebec, the Council of the Bar Society of Montreal, and the Bar Society of Quebec; the Dominion Marine Association, controlling practically all the shipping on the Great Lakes; the Council of the Board of Trade at Halifax, and various other bodies, have disapproved of the proposal. We have not heard a word from any source outside of Parliament approving of it.

The Chronicle points out that both the principles and practice of Admiralty are unfamiliar to most of the judges and claims it to be unreasonable to expect the members of the Supreme Court, with quite sufficient things engaging their attention already, to begin the study of a new subject. So far as we know the question has not been discussed here. The British Columbia judge in Admiralty is Mr. Justice Martin, and the business of the court is carried on in a manner that appears to give satisfaction to the legal profession as well as to litigants. We do not think any one in this province wishes to see any change in the constitution of the court by assigning other judges to it. Admiralty law is of all branches of jurisprudence the most specialized, and there is none about which the ordinary legal practitioner knows less or concerning which the majority of judges are less informed.

A STORY FROM OTTAWA

We find in a contemporary an Ottawa story which we give for what it is worth. It is that Sir Wilfrid Laurier intends to give up the leadership of the Liberal party "much sooner than most people expect," and that he wants the question of succession decided before the elections come on "next summer." It is alleged that the Premier at one time favored Mr. Fielding for the position, but that of late doubts have arisen in his mind as to the expediency of entrusting the Finance Minister with the responsibility, principally because the Quebec Liberals do not want him. In this emergency, Sir Wilfrid is said to favor the selection of Mr. Rodolphe Lemieux for the premiership.

If suavity, unfailing good humor and an abundance of tact are sufficient to make a man a successful political leader, Mr. Lemieux holds all the cards, but something more is needed, and we take leave to doubt if the English Liberals would follow the brilliant young Frenchman. We are inclined to take stories of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's early retirement with the whole contents of the salt cellar. He is only sixty-seven years of age. Sir John Macdonald was seventy-six at the time of his death and with Lord Strathcona projecting "all-red lines" at eighty-eight, Sir Mackenzie Bowell at eighty-five discussing questions of the day with force and aggressiveness, Senator Scott laughing at the idea of going on the shelf at eighty-three and Sir Charles Tupper at eighty-seven still shaping Imperial sentiment, it seems a little premature to talk of Sir Wilfrid Laurier as a "has-been." A few years ago it seemed as if he might be forced to retire, but it looks at present as if those who are waiting for his shoes will have to exercise a considerable stock of patience. However we give the story as told above for what it is worth. Sometimes the unexpected happens, but our guess is that the next elections will be held with him as Premier, if he is alive and in as good health as at present.

A GLANCE AHEAD.

In the course of a few months the townsite of Prince Rupert will be placed upon the market and we may look forward to one of the most remarkable of all real estate movements. Of merely speculative buying of town lots there is very little at present anywhere in the Pacific Northwest, and pending the opening of the Grand Trunk Pacific city, we do not look for any revival. Speculative buyers are likely to hold their money until they see a chance to turn it over quickly at a profit, and this condition is not found in this part of the continent just now. By speculative buying we mean purchases made with the view to immediate sales, not those made for the purposes of subdivision, nor those made as an investment, the profit depending upon the general enhancement of values. For purchases of this kind the time is auspicious in the older communities, for prices are not inflated and an advance is certain.

We hear no fears expressed of the effect of Prince Rupert upon the future of Victoria. Indeed, the general opinion seems to be in the other direction. This city will derive a direct benefit from the fact that during next fall and winter thousands of people will make the journey to and from the site of the future city. Of these many will visit Victoria, either coming or going, and it is altogether probable that some investors will make this city their headquarters because of the educational advantages available here. This observation applies not only to the pioneers of Prince Rupert but to many others who will engage in the exploitation of the riches of the region to be opened by the new railway. Apart therefore from the commercial prospects of the future, and of these we do not propose to speak today, Victoria stands in a position to profit greatly by the development of which Central British Columbia is about to become the theatre.

There is one thing in this connection which ought to be brought prominently forward, namely, the imperative necessity of securing railway connection with the north end of Vancouver Island. With such a railway and a steamship service such as the Canadian Pacific inaugurated with the Princess Victoria and will improve with the new Princess, Prince Rupert will be brought within twenty-four hours of this city. This will be a very substantial advantage to both places and towards securing it the best efforts of all interested ought to be directed.

WHAT IS HISTORY?

Dr. C. Morse, writing in the Law Times Review, says that history is truth, which seems to a truism, for how can a thing be history, which is not true? The difficulty seems to be for historians to find out what is the truth. Taking our own local affairs, which do not go back many years, do we not all know that it is exceedingly difficult to get at the actual facts of the early days of the province? There may come a time when people seeking for the materials for a history of this province may open a volume of stories written by a well-known Victorian, and take his fancies for facts, a line of action against which he would himself be the first to object. It is almost impossible to find a historian whose version of the event of past days can be implicitly accepted. Take the burning of Jeanne d'Arc. The accounts of the execution of this girl are hopelessly divergent. To come nearer modern times what shall we say of Napoleon? Abbott, an American writer, is author of a history of this great man, but the character depicted by him is as unlike the Napoleon of Madame Junot's Memoirs as it could well be. We suppose that the times have not changed since the earliest ages in this respect, and that they will never change. All writers must look at things through their own glasses, which are obscured by prejudices, religious, political or personal, or by lack of facilities for observation. At the same time there is a wide difference between historians. Some of them are content to state facts without coloring them. Others apparently are more anxious to make known their opinions and draw deductions. Instances of deliberate perversions of the truth are not infrequent.

NAVAL DEFENCE.

The naval defence of the Empire has been brought into prominence by the invitation extended by Australia to the United States fleet. The disposition of so many newspapers nowadays to magnify incidents of all kinds and to discover a significance in things which they do not really possess, leads a cautious man to hesitate before accepting the explanations given for Australia's action. We know how it was in the case of Vancouver's invitation to the same fleet, which, we were gravely told by a leading London daily paper, was inspired by a fear of Oriental immigration. Of course, no such idea played any part whatever in influencing the Vancouver City Council to send the invitation, which would have been extended with equal promptness to a squadron from Japan or Germany. But this is only by the way. The general question of Imperial naval defence has come to the front again and calls for consideration. We think it is time for the people of Canada to take it up with a determination to see in what direction their duty lies. There ought to be no party politics in this, and in any observations which the Colonist may make it will endeavor to avoid anything which may appear to have a partizan basis.

The position which Sir Wilfrid Laurier has taken in regard to a direct money contribution to the British navy, namely that such a payment would be an infringement upon the principle that there should be no taxation without representation, seems to have been accepted by Canadian public men generally, and may therefore be taken as representative of Canadian sentiment. Without admitting that such a contribution is the best way in which Canada can bear her share of Imperial defence, we suggest that in the reason above stated the principle, upon which it is based, is pushed quite to the limit, if not beyond it. If the parliament of Canada should vote a certain sum of money to the Imperial government to be expended upon the navy, it would not be said that this was an appropriation of public money in defiance of the established rule that there shall be no taxation without representation. The people would not be taxed to raise the money by any other power than themselves, and so far as the principle is involved there is no material difference between voting a sum en bloc and voting it in items. It is true that the Canadian parliament could have no supervision over the expenditure of the money, and to appropriate any part of the public revenues to purposes over which the representatives would have no supervision is undoubtedly foreign to our ideas of government, yet it is not so much so that any of the rights of self-government would be forfeited if it should be determined that it was wise for the Dominion to make a contribution to the cost of the navy.

The United Kingdom expends upon the navy, in round numbers, an average of $150,000,000 a year. This may have to be exceeded if the relative strength of the fleet is to be maintained as at present. Assuming that the amount named is sufficient and that Australia and Canada contributed pro rata, the burden would be borne by 50,000,000 people at the present time, a number which would steadily increase. That is to say, the contribution would be $3 per capita, or for Canada, approximately $20,000,000. We think the idea that the people of Canada will pay any such sum as $20,000,000 to the British government to be expended on the navy without the Dominion parliament having any supervision over the expenditure may as well be dismissed from consideration at once, for we only hamper the consideration of an important question by importing into it things that are outside the range of possibility. It is only a little less than one-third the proposed German expenditure in 1907-08, and the population of that country is 60,000,000.

A pro rata contribution from Canada, based upon population, being therefore out of the question, there remains the plan of an arbitrary contribution. It is difficult to know how this can be arrived at, and while we are speaking on this aspect of the case it may be as well to mention that, while the people of the United Kingdom contribute $150,000,000 to the maintenance of the navy, almost every dollar of it is disbursed at home, whereas not a dollar of what Canada might contribute would be spent here. The United Kingdom is not on the whole any poorer for its naval expenditure, for the money simply circulates in the community. Any contribution from one of the outlying parts of the Empire would render the contributor so much the poorer. This is not an argument against a contribution, but only a feature of the case that must not be lost sight of. We are frequently harangued by people who tell us about the working man of England spending his hard-earned money for our defence, but they lose sight of the fact that the hard-earned money goes back to the workingman. If we are ever to reach a sane conclusion as to Canada's duty in respect to the naval defence of the Empire, we must endeavor first of all to get a correct idea of the facts.

A piece of very important and excellent news for Victoria is just to hand. It is to the effect that there is an absolute assurance that the tourist traffic through western Canada will be enormous the coming summer. That this city will benefit tremendously from this class of travel hardly requires to be stated. A press dispatch from Chicago, dated March 21, reads, in part, as follows: "Travel to and from California and the entire Pacific coast will be cheaper this summer than ever before during an entire season. After a stormy session of the Transcontinental Passenger association last night, the Harriman lines and the Sante Fe gave independent notice that they would put in summer tourist rates to the Pacific coast, effective between June and October. The notice came after an attempt on the part of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific to prevent summer tourist rates from being made, these roads arguing that a minimum basis of two cents a mile would be better for the railroads. The southern lines thought different and insisted that the Pacific coast should be granted as favorable rates as the Colorado points. The basis to be used for Colorado will, therefore, be the basis for summer tourist rates to all points west of Chicago. This means about $25 one way or $40 round trip. Canadian lines will divert much of the traffic."

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