

THE VICTORIA HOME JOURNAL.

ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY AT VICTORIA, B. C.

SUBSCRIPTION - - \$1.00 PER YEAR.

Advertising Rates on Application.

Address all communications to

THE VICTORIA HOME JOURNAL,
Victoria, B. C.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1892.

NOTICE.

W. H. MANDEL is not employed in any capacity by THE VICTORIA HOME JOURNAL.

RANDOM REFLECTIONS.



DURING the last election for the Local House in this province, the question most prominently before the public was the manner in which the public lands are falling into the hands of speculative holders, to the disadvantage of home-seekers, and the retarding of the development of the province. While the present Government was sustained, although they did not enunciate any settled policy on the land question, and the people did not demand action on any definite lines, yet one thing was made perfectly clear to both Government and Opposition, that there is among the people of this province a feeling of deep dissatisfaction with the results of the land policy carried out by the present and past Governments, and that a plain demand was made by the people in that election for reform of the abuses resulting from it.

The Government during the last session of the House, in deference to this unmistakable expression of the will of the people, introduced legislation presumably in the interest of actual settlement, and for the purpose of discourag-

ing the wholesale purchase of the public lands, which bids fair in the very near future—at least so far as agricultural lands or locations suitable or unsuitable for townsites are concerned—to exhaust the public domain. The legislation referred to is to be found in the Crown Lands Act ("as amended in 1890 and 1891"), clauses 1, 2 and 3, section 29, chapter 66, limiting the amount of lands to be obtained by any one person; fixing the price of such lands after they have been surveyed and classified at the expense of the purchaser, at \$5 per acre for first-class, \$2.50 per acre for second-class, and \$1 per acre for third-class lands.

This legislation has been in force only for one year, and before me as I write a file of the British Columbia Gazette, of the 28th ult., furnishes the plainest evidence that its effects are the very opposite of the predictions of the friends and organs of the Government in its behalf, and of the interests and requirements of the people. Wealthy managers of opulent corporations who are in receipt of princely salaries in that capacity, and whose present possessions run up into the thousands of acres; real estate agents whose names emblazoned on every conceivable kind of shingle, are familiar ornaments of the landscape wherever a boom is being inaugurated; professional men—men sufficiently wealthy to remove them from all reasonable fear of their being compelled to endure the hardships of ranching for a living, and men with scarcely means enough to purchase a flock of chickens to stock a hen coop—seem to have suddenly become possessed of an all-pervading desire to go farming.

Let any one look over the formidable array of names appearing in the Gazette as applicants for lands, and the list of applicants for railway charters, electric and otherwise, to run within and about and around, in a sort of indiscriminate, aimless fashion peculiarly their own, and he can hardly escape coming to the conclusion that the farming that is to be promoted by the present Land Act is more likely to be in men's minds or on paper than on the face of mother earth. Its plain purpose is but to accelerate the process of the forestalling of the natural opportunities which this province affords to industry, by specu-

lators for their own enrichment, and to the detriment of the best interests of the country. To raise the price of public lands is to put it in the power of moneyed men only to buy them, and to enable them to put a higher price on lands which they have previously bought at the cheaper rate. To restrict the number of acres which one man may buy is to make it profitable for one set of men to use another set of men as their tools for evading the law, and though both sets of men are alike guilty of the fraud to put the profits of it into the hands of wealth.

To make the settler bear the cost of surveys, to compel him to pay cash down for his lands, is to shut out the laboring classes of smallest means from getting land, and this class has invariably proven in the experience of other countries in America, the best and most successful settlers. Land has two kinds of value—value for present use, or what anyone could reasonably expect to get for its use in competition with all other such land (that is real value), and the value to which it may reach at some future time by reason of the progress and improvements of the community, that is speculative value. There is a great difference in value in which the first is the only element, and value in which the first and second are combined. When the Government sells lands which have no improvements on them, nor any of a public character in their vicinity, for \$5 per acre, they are clearly taking from the man who settles on them to use them, a value which they have not yet reached and which, when they do reach a value, will be the result of improvement he or such as he have made upon the lands themselves, or which have been made in their vicinity by the taxes he has contributed. He is thus made to pay a premium on his own future usefulness.

As a remedy, this idea has proven itself to be a fraud. The Government tacitly admit this when they propose as they do to repeal the existing law and to place the power of giving land on any conditions, in the hands of one or two members of the Government, which is even more objectionable than the present system. The administration of good men possessed of despotic power may be better than the abuse by bad men of the freest forms of govern-