

LAW'S MYSTERIES.

The "mechanism of the law," as operated by the Attorney-General, is indeed inscrutable in its movements and far beyond the mean lay understanding. We have heard it said that in many cases in which the province is directly interested it has been found impossible to move the Hon. the Attorney-General to authorize the proceedings necessary to protect the rights of the people. In the case of the V., V. & E., the people have got it into their stupid heads that the territory in which they are settled would be greatly benefited by the operation of that road. Private parties interested in the maintenance of a monopoly, however, concluded that their "rights" required protection. According to the Colonel, as a matter of course the Attorney-General has been in the habit of becoming a party to proceedings which could not be instituted without his consent. In this instance, however, he was cautious. He refused to act until there had been furnished him an opinion from a judge that the plaintiffs had rights, which required protection and which could not have received protection without the connivance of the Attorney-General. In other words, the applicants for the injunction were told by the judge that if they secured the consent of the Attorney-General he would grant the desired legal impediment to a company building any works it pleased upon its own property. It may be that our untrained lay mind cannot grasp all the fine points of legal decisions, the subtleties of the law are often past finding out by minds burled upon to the finest point of legal acuteness. But it does appear to us that there is something decidedly irregular about this matter, as explained by our esteemed contemporary. We do not believe a judge could be induced to express an opinion privately upon a case which was likely to be brought before him for judgment. Neither do we believe Mr. Eberis could be induced to become a party to a suit without going thoroughly into all the circumstances of the case and weighing all the possibilities. If he was misled, as hinted by the Colonel, and if he has discovered that he made a mistake, as the deprecatory explanations would lead the public to believe, surely it is not too late to make amends. The wishes of the people interested in the territory through which the V., V. & E. will pass should receive the fullest consideration. We read daily glowing descriptions of the enterprise as it is about to be launched into life and activity at present to be observed in various parts of Canada through the influence of railway construction. Why should the government desire to check similar developments in British Columbia? We confess it is beyond us to furnish a satisfactory explanation. The movements of the present government are beyond comprehension, except upon a hypothesis applicable only to such a peculiar combination.

CANADA AND THE WHEAT TAX.

The point, we surmise, about this duty on wheat and corn that causes the greatest disquietude in the United States is the possible outcome of this departure of Great Britain from the standards set up by Cobden and so strenuously upheld by all leading Imperial statesmen since his day. The preference accorded British goods by Canada gives Sir Wilfrid Laurier the right to interrogate the British government as to its intentions in this matter. If there had been no British preference under our custom laws it would clearly have been an impediment upon the part of the Premier to protest on behalf of this country against the application of the duty to Canadian products. As it was intimated in the House of Commons yesterday that the government of this country was in communication with the Colonial Secretary in regard to this subject, our Tory friends will be pleased to be thus informed that the interests of Canada are being in no wise neglected. They will also be gratified to be told that the matter is still under consideration and that it will be fully discussed at the conference of Colonial Premiers and the Colonial Office, and that if an arrangement cannot be arrived at which will be a long stride in the direction of Empire consolidation and will also be of great material benefit to all concerned, it will be through no fault of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his colleagues but because British statesmen are yet afraid of foreign retaliation and set a higher value upon a goodwill which we believe would not be withdrawn than upon the establishment of the Empire on a sure and lasting foundation. The opinion of Mr. Chamberlain on this subject are well known. He has had a hard fight against the innate conservatism of his colleagues in carrying the point he has gained. He has still a great battle to fight; but we believe he will prevail and that he will be able to complete the work he has set himself to do. The effect upon Canada of exemption from the duty on wheat, insignificant though it appears, no man can estimate. The truth is the wheat lands of the Northwest would be tremendous.

UNITED STATES AND THE WHEAT TAX.

The British duty on breadstuffs has excited as much discussion in the United States as in the country which it is imposed to be principally affected. Ways and means of retaliation for this alleged offence is the chief subject the disciples and organs of know-nothingism have lately been pondering over. About one-

third of the American exports of wheat and its products finds a market in Great Britain, and as it is a cardinal doctrine of the protectionist that the exporter pays the duty, it is obvious that a clear case has been established for reprisals. The difficulty arises when an examination of the field is made in the hope of finding a gap through which retaliatory measures may be passed. If any British goods are admitted free of duty, then the eagle-eye of the protectionist will surely become dimmed and some careless lover of freedom will seize an opportunity to quickly become a millionaire at the expense of his fellow lovers of Liberty in her highest form of development. Still it must be a fact that the United States market is not completely preserved, because we are told the British government waits with fear and trembling to see what the United States is going to do about this outrageous attempt to deprive her of her rights to sell wheat and corn in the British markets without the intervention of even such a slight obstacle, as has now been erected. Can it be possible that the thought of this fence being raised still higher is at the bottom of the consternation, coupled with the revelation that free trade Britain may become convinced that it is not well that she of all the world should refrain from taking a hand in the game of the protectionists? After all we do not believe that British statesmen are greatly alarmed about the attitude of the United States. British industries have been hampered and hammered to the limit, and if they have thus far refused to be downed it is not because her neighbors do not possess the will and have not exercised all the power at their command to kill them. The worst that could be done has been done. The test has been applied and British industry has survived. Perhaps she has reached the turning-point in her career and may henceforth receive more considerate treatment at the hands of the rivals who have so long labored under the curious delusion that her downfall would in some mysterious way be of particular benefit to them.

MUST WAIT SEVEN YEARS.

In an interview with representatives of Montreal newspapers, Mr. D. D. Mann, of the Canadian Northern, said: "We will do well if we get to British Columbia in seven years." The people of Victoria were distinctly told that work would be commenced immediately on this end, and that this city would be the Pacific headquarters of the company, with head offices, etc., "right in our midst," with the movements of an army of workmen directed therefrom. But that was before election day. It would be possible for the government to run two more elections upon the same pledge, if there be anyone insane enough to conceive of the possibility of such a combination holding together for seven years. Possibly the Colonel considers the Canadian Northern too good a card to be thrown away on one ordinary bye-election. It is to be kept in cold storage for an indefinite period, because if Mr. Mann does not expect to be British Columbia for seven years, it may be twelve before he reaches Victoria. All this proves most conclusively our contention that the Canadian Pacific "contract" was nothing more than an election dodge. Mackenzie & Mann had a big job on their hands in Manitoba and the Northwest to be ready to perfect their plans for a coast connection. Leaving aside altogether the matter of the main line, the influx of population has created a demand of considerable magnitude for branch lines which must be met immediately in order to prevent a stampede of population into the west, which would do infinite harm to the territories. But as our government became impotent and implored the company to accept such terms as will never again be available, Mr. Greenfields has been authorized to accept of an option which may be lifted in seven years if the contractors are ready to go on. If they are not, the job can wait until they are at leisure to undertake it. But even in that case, what changes may take place? There may be other lines anxious to get through to the coast before then, and it may also be that the fashion of throwing great blocks of territory at the feet of promoters shall have passed away forever. In any case it is perfectly safe to say that when Mackenzie & Mann are ready to commence their line to the coast, much better terms will be secured than those proposed by Mr. Greenfields as the price of the government's salvation.

GRAVES OF CANADIANS.

The Times is in receipt of a communication from His Honor the Lieut-Governor asking us to give publicity to a circular which has been issued by the Canadian South African Memorial Association. The paper is dated from the Governor-General's office, Ottawa. The people of Victoria and the surrounding districts are specially interested in this movement, because relatively a very large number of their kindred and friends are at rest in the dreary-looking veldt. Sir Henri has instructed his secretary to write that he "feels the objects of the Association are such as will appeal to all Canadians, and he earnestly hopes the people of British Columbia will do their duty in giving assistance to this patriotic and laudable movement, and thereby perpetuate the memory of those gallant heroes who have fought and died so nobly in their country's cause in the battle-fields of South Africa." The objects

THE PROVINCIAL PROGRESSIVE PARTY.

HARMONIOUS MEETINGS HELD AT KAMLOOPS.

The Object of the Convention—The Platform as Finally Adopted by Delegates.

A delegate to the convention, held at Kamloops last week, was asked by a Times representative as to the probable effect of the movement in the political field. "That will depend entirely on the degree of enthusiasm with which the labor people take up the movement," was the reply. "The earnestness and unanimity of purpose which was displayed by the delegates in their deliberations augurs well for success in the future. The object of the convention was to bring the labor people of the province closer together, and to adopt a common platform on which all could stand, and this was fully attained. While the party is brought into existence through the efforts of organized labor, it is not the intention to confine it to such organizations, but the co-operation and assistance of all who approve of the platform and principles is solicited. The work of organization, which was left in the hands of the executive, will be vigorously pushed forward, and the Provincial Progressive party will be a factor to be dealt with at the next general election. "The impression has gone abroad that lack of harmony prevailed, but that is entirely wrong. The discussions throughout the entire proceedings were lively but in a friendly spirit, and anyone at-

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tempting the convention could arrive at no other conclusion than that all were striving for one common end. The platform as finally adopted is:

1. That this party lays it down as a first principle that they will nominate, endorse or support only such men as will place their signed, undated, resignation in the hands of the convention which nominates or endorses them; that this resignation be sworn to by the nominee, and that the nominee be sworn to by the convention.
2. That the government establish and operate smelters and refineries to treat all kinds of minerals.
3. That the franchise be extended to women.
4. That the abolition of property qualifications for all public offices.
5. That farm improvements, implements and stock not to be taxed, and wild lands to be assessed at the price asked for them by speculative holders.
6. That no land or cash subsidies. Lands to be held for the actual settler.
7. That ten per cent. of all public lands to be immediately set aside for educational purposes and education of all children up to the age of 16 years to be free, secular and compulsory, text books, meals and clothing to be supplied out of the public funds where necessary.
8. Compulsory arbitration of labor disputes.
9. Restriction of Oriental immigration by the government as to the number of immigrants to be allowed, and if said law be disallowed, it be repeatedly re-enacted until the end sought is attained.
10. That to protect us from Asiatics settled in the province the government insert a clause in all private acts of this effect: "This act shall be null and void if the company fails to enter into an agreement with the government as to conditions of construction and operation," and that the House pass a resolution to prohibit the employment of Asiatics on all franchises granted by the provincial House.
11. That the government be authorized to purchase a certain part of each known coal field in order to contain a provision for re-foresting so as to produce a perennial revenue and make pulp manufacture a growing and permanent industry.
12. That the act compelling the sealing of oysters by government sealers be enforced.
13. Absolute reservation from sale or lease of a certain part of each known coal area, so that state owned mines, if necessary, may be easily possible in the future. All coal leases or grants heretofore made to

Minister of Justice to enforce the alien contract labor law, and recommend the enactment of a law making compulsory in the part of said officials to secure its enforcement; further, that circumstantial evidence as applied in criminal law shall suffice to secure a conviction, applying alike to the manager or importer of labor. Carried.

By D. W. Stevens and J. H. Watson—That this convention pronounces unequivocally in favor of the rigid enforcement of the Sunday law, and recommends such additional legislation as will make it more workable and effective. Carried.

By J. D. McEwen and J. H. Watson—That this convention hereby endorses the principle of the bill now before the provincial legislature, entitled "The Workmen's Compensation Act," by G. E. Hawththorpe, and the act "respecting the rights of Trade Unions," by Smith Curtis, and call upon the House to support said bills; also that copies of this resolution be forwarded to Messrs. Hawththorpe and Curtis. Carried.

By H. Buckle and R. Macpherson—That in the opinion of this convention all books used in the public schools of British Columbia should be printed at the government printing office at Victoria, and sold at cost, instead of as at present, by contractors in Eastern Canada. Carried.

By R. Todd and H. Buckle—That the provincial government be asked to have placed on all its printing the union label, and that the union label be made a specification in all contracts when the same is obtainable. Carried.

By the same—That the Dominion government be requested to pass an act legalizing the union label. Carried.

By R. Bulmer and J. H. Watson—Resolved, That in view of the fact of the present building of the Pacific cable and the movement in Great Britain to secure other links in the chain of a round-the-world all-British cable and wire, it is, in the opinion of this convention, that the delegates to the conference of the working people, to urge the assumption of the Canadian Pacific telegraph by the government. Carried.

By James Wills and Wm. Ebbes—That we, the delegates from the various labor unions and reform organizations throughout this province, hereby express our disapproval of the indifference of present and past governments to the interests of the working people. Be it further resolved, That this convention immediately proceed to organize an independent political party and adopt a platform for the guidance of labor, and other reform organizations in future political campaigns. Be it further resolved, That the name of this party shall be the Provincial Progressive Party of British Columbia. Carried.

By Geo. T. Kane and W. Rogers—That the government immediately enact legisla-

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ST. BARNABAS CHURCH.

Annual Vestry Meeting was held on Monday Evening—Election of Officers.

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A GROUP OF DELEGATES TO THE LABOR CONVENTION.

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EPWORTH LEAGUE OF METROPOLITAN CHURCH.

Proposal to Disorganize to Be Considered—Executive Reports Show Good Financial Standing.

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The annual meeting of the Epworth League of the Metropolitan Methodist church was held last evening at the usual place. The honorary president, Rev. Elliott S. Rowe, pastor of the church, presided. The attendance for a meeting so important as the annual session of the association was small, but the business was proceeded with, reports being first read from the executive officers, showing the progress made during the past year, and the present standing of the league financially and numerically. The first report submitted was that of the president, H. J. Knott. He thanked the members of the executive and league for standing by and aiding him in the duties pertaining to his office during the closing term, and stated that the executive had worked together most unflinchingly during the year. Successful meetings had been held monthly at the Old Men's Home and at the Johnson street mission, and the resignations of the first and third vice-presidents, who

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