

VAGARIES OF CONSERVATIVES.

The New Westminster Columbian thinks the Times is between the devil and the deep sea with regard to the tariff, with the Minister of the Interior asserting that there shall be no increase in the duties and the Minister of Public Works advocating increased protection for Canadian industries. We can assure our contemporary that the Times is quite easy in its mind about the alleged differences of opinion of the Ministers. The Fielding tariff has been in existence for a number of years. The country has prospered under it as it never did before. The tariff resulted from consultations and deliberations of Ministers. No doubt there were differences of opinion about it. Were there ever a baker's dozen of gentlemen gathered together who were all of one mind upon any subject brought before them? The tariff is before the Conservative party, and it is the province of the wise men of that party to attack it and show wherein they could improve it. Have they done so? Their criticism has all been couched in general terms. There has been no attempt to point out a weakness in its provisions, except that it has been lowered for the purpose of admitting the products of the manufacturing of Great Britain, alleged to be operated by "pauper labor." The gentlemen who came West alleged that they were in favor of a "mutual preference." They would abolish the present preference and create one under which the products of Great Britain would enter the Canadian market without coming into competition with Canadian manufactured articles. It is not easy to see how this could be done; but they are mighty men and resourceful, our Tory friends, and it is hard to tell what they might do. It is obvious, however, that if Great Britain is to have a real preference, goods must come into this country under it. If the Conservative wise men can arrange a preferential scheme which will enable British merchants and manufacturers to sell their products in this country without competing with some of the established industries in this country, they should outline their plan without delay. For we believe it will take the people all the time between now and the next general election to gather a full comprehension of it. If it be proposed to put forward a plan such as that outlined by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, which advocated a general increase of the tariff to the point of absolute exclusion, leaving the ratio between the preferential and the ordinary tariff undisturbed, we are disposed to think all honest, fair-dealing men in Great Britain and Canada would have good reason to say such a preference merely existed on paper and was a gigantic humbug. Either let us give a real preference, under which the British will be able to do business in the country, or wipe the scheme from the books of state altogether. The manufacturers of the East may think a protection of from 20 to 25 per cent, is not "adequate," but we fancy the consumers of the West think it ought to be sufficient.

If the Conservative newspapers in the West would be frank in their utterances and express their honest opinions, we think they would come here to complete their political education are likely to sink deeper in the deep sea of opposition in their efforts to placate the devil of "adequate protection." They found the farmers of the prairies unanimous in their hostility to any increase of the tariff. In their pilgrimages through British Columbia they must have encountered a great wave of public opinion rising against even the present duties on mining machinery. The industry is languishing, and the stagnation attributed to be due to burdensome preferential and federal taxation. There may be differences of opinion as to the causes which are operating to depress the chief industry of British Columbia; but there is no doubt as to the fact that the blame is ascribed by the men who have votes to burdensome taxation. Since the Laurier government came into power the duties on agricultural implements have been reduced about 25 per cent., while mining machinery not manufactured in Canada has been placed on the free list.

In view of the above facts, we are not surprised that the Conservative leaders becoming somewhat wobbly in their utterances about the tariff. Neither Mr. Sifton nor Mr. Tarte created the present tariff. Neither Mr. Sifton nor Mr. Tarte can amend it for better or for worse. The tariff is a fact of the government as a whole. If Mr. Borden and the men he designs to take into his government when he attains power think they can produce something more symmetrical and less likely to hamper industry, they should get together and turn it out without delay. As it is, judging by their utterances, they are vastly farther apart in their opinions than Messrs. Tarte and Sifton. And the more they talk the more confusion they create in the minds of their hearers. At the Victoria theatre it was vehemently declared the British preference should be abolished entirely; that it was a humbug and a sham. It was also said that it had been instrumental in closing up a cotton factory in Montreal. Such statements serve to prove the necessity for an understanding among the members of the party to prevent them from making themselves ridiculous. How could a preference that was not a preference and of no value to the British

manufacturer by its competition close up a Canadian factory. Our Tory friends have been paying a great deal of attention to Mr. Tarte lately. Some of them have gone so far as to intimate that they have even forgotten that the last Dominion campaign was principally waged against him and his alleged pro-French proclivities, while others have boldly stretched forth the hand of brotherhood and invited him to join them, forgetting in their eagerness for the acquisition of the strong man, "the master of the administration," that it was he who, disgraced with the routiness at the heart of the "once great party," laid bare the iniquities which resulted in its undoing. We invite those men of many minds to ponder over the following words of the man they admire, delivered at a meeting lately held in Toronto: "A public man must deal with these great questions in no narrow party spirit; he must look to the interests of the nation before of first considering the petty interests of party. The best thing to do was to try to harmonize their views upon trade questions and work together."

DOCTORING THE NEWS.

A correspondent of the Times wants to know why it is that the newspapers of Canada do not join together and secure their news, especially that relating to Great Britain and her possessions, from an independent source. What stands in the way of them taking the necessary action? In the early days of the Dominion, when there were only a few daily papers, and these published in less than half a dozen cities, the question was merely one of expense. They simply could not afford to maintain a news-gathering agency, and to obtain a report of the events of the day were compelled to purchase the dispatches of the Associated Press, which, as regards European news, were made up in the office of the New York Times from the special cables of the great American dailies, and distributed among the papers in all parts of this continent. In those days the art of spicing the news according to the assumed taste of the reader had not been acquired. The facts were given, the student of public affairs being left to read into them whatever meaning accorded with his fancy or his particular prejudice. Coloring came into vogue at a comparatively recent date. We presume that on account of the great increase in the business of the Associated Press, a different system of handling its news has now been adopted. Whatever view we may take as to the value of the news it supplies to Canadian papers, there is no questioning the fact that it is thoroughly up-to-date in its methods, and that its ramifications on this continent are widely extended. But while the Associated Press is an admirable institution from the point of view of the class it is specially designed to serve, it has long ceased to meet the requirements of Canadian newspapers and readers. Apart altogether from the objectionable tone which editors are kept busy trying to eliminate and which no amount of vigilance can eradicate without entirely destroying the news, much that is received is of no value whatever. Canadians recognize the importance of the United States, and are ready to concede that it is the greatest and most remarkable thing in the world from any point of view, but they feel under no particular obligation to continually vaunt it and puff it up. The newspapers and the magazines which, thanks to the short-sighted policy of the Imperial postal authorities, have a large circulation in Canada and an influence upon Canadian rising public opinion which is the reverse of healthy, can do enough of that.

When the Pacific cable is completed, we see no reason why the news of the Empire as a whole should not be gathered from unpolished sources. Canada is rapidly growing in wealth, and her newspapers should soon be independent of their great American contemporaries for the supply of news which is of the most importance to Canadian readers. An Imperial news agency would do a great deal towards creating a better and more intelligent understanding of the position of the different sections of the Empire among the people of the whole of it. Therefore we welcome the announcement of Sir Edmund Barton that the establishment of an Imperial news service will be one of the first projects to engage the attention of the several communities interested, and hope the press of Canada will lend itself to the scheme with enthusiasm.

HUNTERS AND BUSH FIRES.

It is not rather a curious circumstance that the forest fires which have devastated Oregon, Washington and British Columbia, in the cases of the two states causing the loss of millions of dollars' worth of property and more than a score of lives, should all have commenced simultaneously? The coincidence in the outbreak was so marked that in imagination one could almost perceive the signal for the application of the torch being given and the fire starting forward in its path of destruction and death. Naturally there has been considerable speculation as to the cause of the conflagrations. The woods, the brush and the grass were dry and in a high degree inflammable, but so they had been for more than a month. Some say sparks from locomotives are responsible. But the engines have been puffing forth their coals all summer, and the destruction through their agency has been insignificant compared with that resulting from the late

general outbreak. Many of the fires originated far from railways, and it would be obviously unfair to blame the roads for any large part of the destruction. Some of the more censorious are inclined to find an explanation for the phenomena in the opening of the shooting season. The woods have been full of sportsmen, many of them immature years and judgment, and thoughtless about the possible consequences from fires left smouldering in the midst of material reduced to the inflammability of matchwood by months of dry weather and a scorching hot sun.

We are not disposed to lay the blame for the recent devastation upon any class. We prefer to follow the procedure of the nonplussed jury and ascribe the calamity to a "visitation of Providence." It was merely a coincidence that the shooting season and the bush fire season arrived this year about the same time. At the same time, it is our duty to point out that in the interests of the people whose property, the accumulation of a life of toil, is yearly endangered, some attempt should be made to enforce the provisions of the Bush Fires Act.

Though the subject is not exactly a kindred one, we may point out that the game act is in some respects virtually a "dead letter." The open season for pheasants is not supposed to come in until October 1st. Yet in certain districts more pheasants than grouse have been killed since September 1st, it is claimed. It is not to be expected that the general public, which cares for none of these things, should be taxed for the purpose of enforcing the provisions of the game law. A tax should be put upon guns, and the resultant revenue applied in engaging efficient men who could devote all their time to seeing that the provisions of these acts of very great importance are observed to a certain degree at least. The effect of such a provision would have a tendency to restrict the operations of the class which brings the very name of hunters into disrepute.

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer says the nations which heavily subsidize the building and operations of ships are gradually driving the British off the seas. It is not long since the Sound paper, in advocating a policy of heavy subsidies to American ships, held that the British mercantile marine was built up and maintained in its present position by another nation's subsidies. The Post-Intelligencer is wrong in its facts and incorrect in its assumptions. Great Britain is holding her own upon the sea in spite of the competition of government pampered rivals. She builds ships to earn money, and will be found doing business upon the seas when the other nations come to their senses and decide that the only way to permanent success lies in following her example.

The possible fate of the Donkubors sits heavy upon the mind of the editor of the Colonist. Those peculiar people have put in a winter or two in the Northwest and have survived the ordeal. It is said they are so merciful to their beasts that they yoke their own flesh and blood in harness to do the work of their farms. Quakers though they are in their religious belief, they will get over that weakness. A generation will arise with as little inclination to perform labor which can be done by animals or machines as the majority of Canadians of our origin.

Seattle has fallen behind in the race for the baseball championship of the Northwestern states, and the people of the city have raised a big purse to spur the players on to greater exertions. The United States is a peculiar country, inhabited by a peculiar people. Soon no man "in the public eye" will do his duty unless a prize be "hung up" for his benefit.

A whisky trust has been organized in Ireland. That is about the limit. The oppressor has now done his worst. There will surely be an uprising if the movement extends across the water to Scotland.

EXPLOSION IN MINE. Ronoke, Va., Sept. 15.—A special from Norfolk, W. Va., the Ronoke Times says: A disastrous gas and powder explosion occurred in the Big Co. mine of the Algonqu Coal & Coke Co., here this morning. Jas. Lester, an engineer; John Rockle, a Hungarian miner, and 15 colored miners are known to be in the mine now, and there is no chance of their being recovered alive, as they are beyond the point where the explosion occurred, and the gas and smoke is so thick that the rescuing parties are being driven back. H. F. Frankenberg, the bank boss, and Geo. Gaspie, a Hungarian miner, successfully succeeded in crawling over the fallen coal and slate to the lights of the rescuing party, and have been taken out alive, although they are both badly burned, and were nearly suffocated by the gas and smoke inhaled.

"The explosion was caused by an accumulation of gas catching on fire from the lamp of a miner, who was going to work. This in turned fired six kegs of blasting powder that had been stored in the mine. The explosion knocked down all the brattice for a mile back towards the mine entrance, thus cutting off the air from the men imprisoned behind the brattice. There had been a small gas explosion in the mine on Sunday last and the mine superintendent, A. J. Stewart, had cautioned the men not to attempt to work again until the air had been tested by a safety lamp, but they disregarded his orders and went in. A party headed by Mine Inspector Cooper attempted a rescue this morning, but was driven back by the want of air. It is now learned that the coal is burning, and there is no hope of extinguishing the flames until a new air passage can be built to the point of the explosion."

THE REAPPEARANCE OF SEA-SERPENT IN COLUMNS OF THIS MORNING'S COLONIST

Somewhat Either in Japan or Victoria Has Been Seeing Visions—Entertaining But Incredible.

The sea-serpent has again made its appearance, this time in the columns of the morning paper. To the Times belongs the credit of resurrecting the last one, which, it was said "stretched from mast to mast." The Colonist immediately impugned the veracity of the Times's informant, and in the strongest terms asserted that this exceptional monster didn't exist, that it was a fishy creation of a sailor's mental machine.

To-day, however, the morning paper published a sea-serpent story that dwarfs the wildest phantasms of Louis de Rougemont into cheap every day occurrences. Its informant is not an imaginative sailor, but an Oriental exchange, and judging by the faithfulness with which the story was reproduced it quite apparently went down hokus-bokus. The terrible marine monster is alleged to have been caught in nets by Japanese fishermen of the Kochi prefecture. The account in this morning's paper innocently states that in the carcass of one of the sea-serpents was found the remains of a human being, much evidence that some unknown person had fallen a victim of the bottom-seekers of the sea.

The story continues: "The sea-serpent belched with rage as it vainly struggled in the meshes of the nets. Its big eyes, with the whites glaring, were enough to frighten the bravest of men, and with the strangeness of the sight—for the serpent—according to the story told by its slayers—continued to bite at the net with its fangs, roar continuously, and with a side movement of its great head, it struck at the net with a horn on its forehead, which was afterwards found to be two feet, two inches in length."

Eventually the creature was dispatched with rifle bullets. Shortly afterwards another serpent of the same family if there was one, came dashing toward the boats like a torpedo boat destroyer, with head raised, and arched body a la cobra de capello, fire in its eye and nostrils. The story also said this monstrous was also slain after a terrific bombardment. But the story does not end here. Measurement found the length of the male to be 48 feet, and the female 30 feet. The longest of the longest about seven inches. They also had ears two feet long and a horn on the forehead two feet two inches in length.

That is about all, but it is enough. The first serpent is stated to have belched. This is not surprising, when it is considered that it had the remains of a human being in its stomach. It was plainly a case of the "man-eater," if not the "man-eater," which the object of the sheets of flame that must have been emitted from the creature's eyes and nostrils. Who ever heard of a sea-serpent without any food? The story also said the whites of the eyes were glaring. That was awful, and apparently a symptom of some ocular trouble. The monster also had a "side movement," which is a case of the "man-eater," if not the "man-eater," which the object of the sheets of flame that must have been emitted from the creature's eyes and nostrils. Who ever heard of a sea-serpent without any food? The story also said the whites of the eyes were glaring. That was awful, and apparently a symptom of some ocular trouble. 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