

The Colonist.

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LEGISLATURE DISSOLVED

The Legislature has been dissolved and the new election will be held on the 28th of March, nominations being made on the 12th. As this announcement has been expected ever since the beginning of the year, it will occasion no surprise.

The House which has just gone out of existence has sat three times. It had the right to a fourth session, but in view of the extensive programme which has been proposed by the government and received legislative sanction, and also in view of the changing character of the electorate by the addition of new names to the voters' list, it has been deemed advisable not to permit it to last its full term. The practice of having more frequent dissolutions than the law calls for is rapidly gaining favor in the United Kingdom as well as in Canada.

The previous election was held after the announcement of an extensive policy of railway construction, and the plan thus outlined by the government received a very remarkable endorsement. That policy was carried forward through its first stage at the session following the election. It was advanced to the second stage during the session, which has just closed, and it is very proper that the electorate shall have the opportunity of expressing their approval or disapproval, as they may see fit, at the earliest possible day. Their discussion cannot fail to have a very important influence upon the course of the government in this regard hereafter.

The expenditures provided for by the appropriations just made by the House are unprecedented in magnitude in this province. The government has thought it well to give the electorate an opportunity of expressing itself as to this policy of large outlay in works of improvement before the expenditure has actually been made. Opponents of the government certainly cannot complain on this score. If they can demonstrate to a sufficient number of the electors that the present administration is not to be entrusted with this great responsibility a new administration will be formed of which they will have control.

That the forthcoming election will result in the return of the government to power seems to be a foregone conclusion. We know the proverbial uncertainty of elections, and shall not indulge in any prophecy; but it may be said without any doubt that at present there does not appear to be more than one constituency in the province in which the Opposition has even a fighting chance.

THE SESSION

The Legislature was prorogued yesterday after an uneventful session, and yet one that was marked by the passage of much very important legislation and the appropriation of the largest sum of money ever voted out of revenue by any province in Canada. The session was uneventful only because of the lack of any very acute discussion, a condition of things inevitable in a House where the Opposition was represented by one Liberal and two Socialists, and one of the latter refrained from any very active participation in its work.

Referring especially to the session, which has just closed, it was one that will have an important bearing upon the future of the province. The railway legislation is a part of a broad plan of development, which we venture to think will be carried on boldly in the future. The Forest Act is of itself sufficiently important to characterize the session as one of great future influence. The authorization of the beginning of work upon the Provincial University will rank among the historic events in the history of British Columbia. There has been a great mass of minor legislation, some of it bearing upon matters vital to the welfare of the public.

A very heavy responsibility has rested upon the Attorney-General. With all respect to Mr. Brewster, it cannot be claimed that he is a competent legal critic, and an Attorney-General, who has no one to subject his work to the severe test of hostile legal criticism, is in no enviable position. Mr. Bower has exhibited great industry and much skill in the discharge of the exceptionally heavy duty resting upon him as the chief law officer of the Crown. Even his political opponents must concede that he filled his arduous position with an intelligent appreciation of his varied subjects, unflinching industry, great professional ability, and excellent good humor. We think that to say this is only fair to a minister, whose work is of a class which the public at large have not many opportunities of properly estimating.

Mr. McBride comes out of the session more strongly entrenched in the confidence of his supporters in the House and the public generally than ever before. He has shown his recognition of the needs of British Columbia for a strong and progressive policy, and he has had the courage to give a lead which will be productive of results of the greatest value. It has been given to no premier in Canada to enter office with a depleted public treasury, and a well-nigh exhausted public credit, and within less than nine years find himself in a position to undertake and pay for, without borrowing, the greatest system of public works ever sanctioned by a provincial legislature, and to provide for railway development upon a scale heretofore only contemplated by the Dominion. It is a record of which any public man might well be proud. He has grown with his responsibilities. He has developed strength with the added burdens which he has had to assume. It is not to detract from the ability of his colleagues to say that his is the master mind of the most able and progressive government British Columbia has ever had.

One of the most valuable features of the past session was the Budget Speech, a compilation of facts and figures bearing upon the present condition and future prospects of the province, that has never been surpassed. Mr. Ellison, Minister of Finance and Agriculture, is a gentleman who is able to bring to bear upon the diverse duties devolving upon him a discriminating mind, a thorough knowledge of the province, strong, practical common sense and a progressive spirit. His work has not been spectacular, but in the years to come British Columbia will feel its beneficial effects.

As we said on a former occasion Dr. Young, as Minister of Education, has had placed within his reach an enviable opportunity, and it is only fair to say that he has been largely instrumental in creating it. To be entrusted with the duty of laying the foundation of a great provincial University is an honorable task such as few men have been called upon to perform. Whenever occasion requires Dr. Young to deal with this great work in a public speech he does so in such a broad, illuminating manner as to inspire public confidence in the highest degree. No one questions his fitness for his monumental task.

Mr. Ross made a high place for himself by his speech introducing the Forest Act, and he added to the reputation thus won by his treatment of the details of this very important measure. Equally courteous to critics and friends, ready to accept suggestions that commended themselves to him, and able to give good reasons for all his proposals, Mr. Ross has greatly added to his reputation as a public man during the last session.

Mr. Taylor is a minister who must be judged by his works rather than by his words. The former are many; the latter are few. The preparation of the programme for the Public Works department, involving the great sum of eight millions of dollars, was a task calling for a thorough knowledge of the conditions of the province, a comprehensive grasp of a great subject and a just sense of proportion. He is making a high reputation for himself.

Of the two gentlemen, upon whom devolved the task of criticism, it is right that a few words should be said, and it is a pleasure to be able to say that they discharged their task very well indeed. Both of them added to the number of their personal friends during the session, and both gained in reputation as fair-minded critics.

PROGRESS IN VICTORIA

A pleasing feature in the progress of Victoria is that the enterprise and energy, of which signs are visible on every hand, are not attributable to new comers, and the introduction of outside capital so much as to the faith of the older residents in the future of the city, a faith that is meeting with ample reward. The old-established firm of Pemberton & Sons led in the new movement, and Mr. Joseph Sayward followed suit, and they found others ready to imitate their example, including more recent residents, so that today we find all over the central part of the city new buildings being erected, which in character would be an ornament to any place in Canada. From the fine hotel on Pandora, erected by Mr. Lim Bang, to the great structure to be erected on the corner of Humboldt and Government, there are many proofs of the faith of the older residents in their city and of the confidence of newer comers as well. The vacant area formerly occupied by D. Spencer, Ltd., and the Five Sisters Block yet awaits occupants, but on the other side of Government street Messrs. Hibben & Co. have begun the erection of what will be one of the finest business blocks in the city. The new Union Bank building and that under construction for Messrs. Elliott, McLean & Shandley and Messrs. MacPherson and Fullerton Brothers will completely alter the appearance of the business centre and will make the one-storey buildings adjoining them look very mean and insignificant. There was a very general hope among the citizens that when the Canadian Pacific Telegraphs moved out of the little structure on the corner of Gov-

ernment street and Trounce Alley, Mr. William Wilson, the owner of the premises, would follow the example of his fellow pioneers and place upon what is undoubtedly one of the best business sites in the city a structure equal at least to any other in the vicinity. Many citizens have expressed regret at what is understood to be Mr. Wilson's intention to leave the structure as it is. Possibly the Colonist has no right to offer suggestions to any one as to what he shall do with his property, but there are times when it seems a duty to do so. We are going, with all respect to Mr. Wilson as one of the oldest, most wealthy and most esteemed of our citizens, and as the head of one of our most enterprising and progressive families, to say to him in plain words that the public will be greatly disappointed if he does not take steps forthwith to replace his premises with a building in keeping with the value of such a business site.

The improvement taking place on Fort Street is very marked and more is to follow speedily. The day of the one-storey shack has passed for Victoria, and never will return. In the observations we have made above reference has been made only to a very few of those who have contributed towards bringing about the general air of progress and prosperity in evidence on every hand. The changes along Yates Street are many. Douglas Street is going ahead. And the important thing for property owners to consider is that the period of expansion has only just begun. In the course of a very short time, quite as soon, indeed, as we can get ready for it, Victoria will feel a new and unprecedented impetus from railway construction, including, let it be remembered, the long looked-for all-rail connection with the Mainland. It may be recalled that only a very few years ago doubts were expressed as to whether one apartment house in the city would pay. Now few people know how many there are, and others are being planned. A few years previously we were told that we had ample hotel accommodation. Now, though we have many times what we had then, we have not enough. When the Law Chambers was built on Bastion street, the wise folk doubted the necessity of providing so much office room yet you could place the whole structure on a single floor of the Pemberton or Sayward blocks. And the progress we have seen is nothing to what we shall see in the very near future, of which we hope the owners of one-storey business houses will take due notice and govern themselves accordingly.

Italy has annexed Tripoli, but apparently Tripoli does not know it.

Better make it unanimous next time, and let's see how it will work.

Hereafter the mayoral veto will be like the House of Lords, dilatory but not prohibitory.

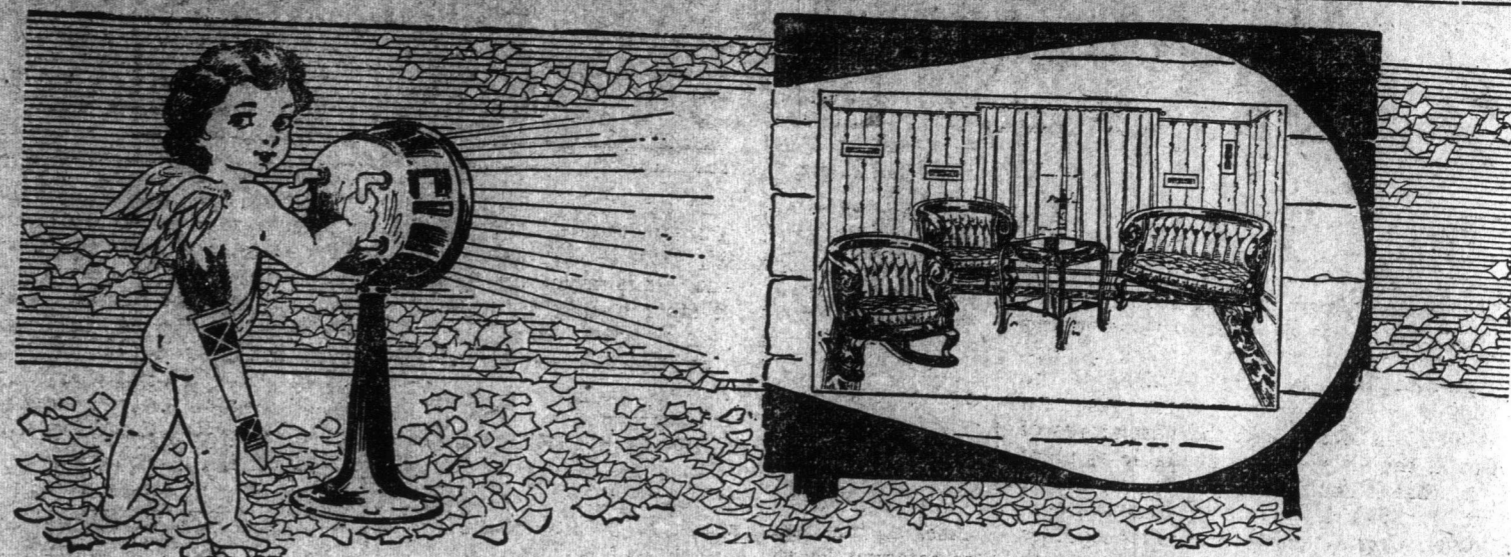
A correspondent informs us that the native lair of the Pessimistic Victorienensis is at the northeast corner of Fort and Broad Streets. That may be so.

The Canadian Pacific has let contracts for the building of 350 miles of railway on the Prairie provinces. This activity on the part of the pioneer company is significant of its expectation of future business. This is Canada's growing time.

The suggestion is now made that the collapse of the Quebec bridge, which occurred in 1907, accompanied by great loss of life, was due to the action of the dynamiting squad, at whose doors so many atrocities have been laid.

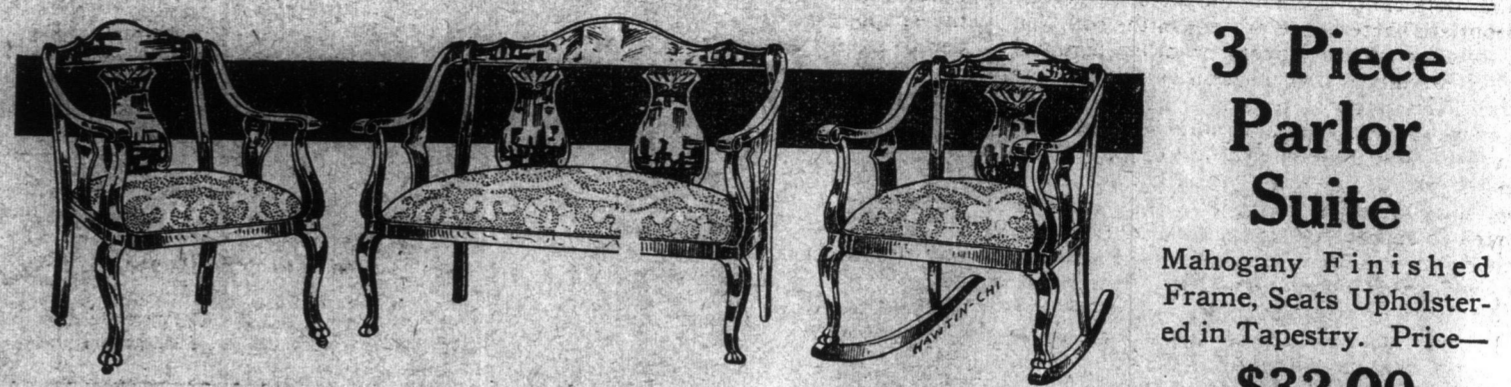
Unless his honor the Lieutenant-Governor sees fit to interpose his will, something which we should certainly not expect from so gallant a gentleman, ladies will shortly be able to practice law in this province, provided always that they can pass the necessary examinations. We think it can be fairly said that the admission of women to the practice of the law has been productive of good wherever it has been permitted.

A rather amusing story is told of the Minister of Education in the new French cabinet. When he went to his office the morning after his appointment the chief clerk refused to permit him to enter. "Monsieur Steeg will not see you," he said, naming the former Minister. "You need not insist; for he is not receiving this morning." It is also said that when Mr. Hammerstein opened his new opera house in London the doorman refused to let him in because he had forgotten to issue an invitation to himself. But older still was the plight in which the President of Switzerland found himself at a recent aviation meet. The gatekeeper refused him admission, until a newsboy exclaimed in the patois of the canton: "Go on, you fool. Don't you know he's the president." The latter part of the remark was addressed to the gatekeeper.



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