The Colonist.

TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 1905.

The Colonist Printing & Publishing Company, Limited Liability.

No. 27 Broad Street, Victoria, B.C.

A. G. SARGISON, Managing Director.

THE DAILY COLONIST

Delivered by carrier at 20 cents per week, or mailed, postpaid, to any part of Canada (except the city) United Kingdom and the United States, at the following rates:

One year	$5 00
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SEMI-WEEKLY COLONIST

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IS THE END IN SIGHT?

The last despatches from St. Petersburg would seem to indicate the possibility—even probability—of the protracted battle of Mukden Plain proving the beginning of the end of the terrible war. There is no denial or concealment at the Russian capital of the completeness of the Japanese triumph; and, stunned by cumulative disasters, the people of the nation clamor for an early peace. They are satiated with blood—the cry of the widow and the orphans has penetrated the palace walls. Expediency, too, dictates abandonment of further struggling against the inevitable. Russia has learned the lesson of her successive defeats. Her pride is humbled in the dust, and nothing can obscure the fact that continuation of the war means for Russia but augmentation of the total of butchered men and added triumphs for the enemy's arms. Peace must be sought, though ignominious. The war has been comparatively short, but so great have been the antagonistic forces and so frightful the carnage with "civilization's" perfection of engines of destruction, that the world has sickened at its horrors. Humanity demands a halt. It is safe to say that the argument of horrors presented by the conflict in Manchuria has done more toward the advancement of universal arbitration of international differences than all the peace conferences ever yet projected. And while Russia, in seeking peace on the heels of crushing defeats in series, must pocket national pride, she need feel no shame for the reputation of her individual soldiers. The stock of the nation is sound. Years of residence in a fool's paradise—of the erection of a crushing load of official incompetence in high places, the inevitable result of uncontradicted degeneracy—of stagnation in national thought and movement—and of servile subjection of the blood, bones and brains of the Slav race have brought the natural punishment—no more. To continue the war further would be little short of madness for Russia. She is not a united nation, and the volcano of popular unrest and real reform threatens at any time to overflow the empire with a lava tide of revolution. The possibilities of the new and reconstructed Russia still furnish food for proud and lofty contemplation by true friends of the Muscovite people.

FISHERY DEVELOPMENT.

The fisheries of Vancouver Island coastal waters would seem to be coming at last into their own. Heretofore the speculative instinct has to a large extent dominated industrial activity in this corner of the earth, a natural and almost inevitable feature of the evolution of any city or country to which gold discoveries have given the pioneer population. The people who came after the gold-seekers have largely given their attention to the alluring field of mining investment and exploitation, and to be appreciated at their worth such interests as those of agriculture, horticulture and fisheries, even more important in the development of a self-maintaining country, have had to await their moment. It is apparent that that moment is now near at hand. From all parts of British Columbia there are presented striking evidences of the success that is to be attained in fruit-raising, and this industry is taking such strides as will shortly bring it into the forefront. Now the fisheries are beginning to receive that measure of attention which their great importance justifies. The salmon-canning industry, which has perhaps advertised British Columbia farther afield and more generally than aught else, is but one item in what eventually will be a grand industrial total. The business established by the New England Fish Company in fresh halibut, now featured as one of the greatest delicacies of the Eastern market, came next in order. And today finds no fewer than half a dozen strong companies in organization, the purpose of which is to exploit and make contributory to provincial business the immense resources of adjacent waters, in salmon, in cod, in halibut, in herring, and in a variety of other excellent food fishes. It is, in the opinion of experts, not by any means too optimistic to say that in the vicinity of Vancouver Island there exist greater resources in fishery wealth than in all other portions of Canada. And the present trend of industrial activity apparently indicates that the advent of fishery operations on a large scale, giving employment to a numerous and industrious population, is dawning.

The expressions of the French press advising overtures for peace on the part of Russia constitute a very significant feature of the present-day literature of the war. The fact is well put from Paris that Russia, in seeking an end to her present difficulties, is no more ignominiously situated than was France with victorious Prussia at her throat.

Victoria's labor unionists are to be congratulated upon having at their head gentlemen who in numerous recent crises, the full significance of which have perhaps not been fully comprehended by the general public, shown themselves sufficiently large-minded to foresee the inevitable consequences of ill-advised industrial strife, and sufficiently firm to make an end of fruitless agitation. It is to the presence of dispassionate and commonsense leaders in the local labor ranks very largely that Victoria enjoys immunity from disastrous strikes, while at the same time the legitimate rights and interests of the workers are nowhere more effectually safeguarded.

The proposition which the Canadian Bankers' Association has made to the federal government looking to the alleviation of the American silver nuisance, is one which will commend itself to the good judgment of business men throughout the Dominion. It is, in brief, that the government should arrange for the banks to take United States silver from the public, reimbursing the banks for the charges on shipping it out of the country, the banks to take at the same time from the government an equivalent amount in Canadian silver. Under such an arrangement the silver circulation of this country would be quickly relieved of a large portion of its foreign coin at comparatively trifling expense, and an immediate demand would be created for the product of our own new Canadian mint, a product on every dollar of which, it must be remembered, our government will make a profit of nearly fifty cents.

A GRAVE ERROR.

It is an unfortunate state of affairs that a religious controversy of great bitterness is likely to follow the proposals of Sir Wilfrid Laurier with respect to separate schools in the Northwest. It is unfortunate for the Liberal party, which has just been returned to power with the undoubted sentiment of the country at its back upon the gravest questions dividing the people of Canada. It is unfortunate for the peace and prosperity of the country; and we fear it will be unfortunate for Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The responsibility, however, must rest upon those who have influenced him to take the course which he has. Provincial rights is an old issue in Canada, and every attempt, however veiled, to interfere with them has always lamentably failed. It is a question upon which the people are particularly alive. It is strange that in the whirligig of time the Liberal party that Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who stood for the principle in old days, should now seek to be the transgressor. When Sir John Macdonald was in legal conflict with Sir Oliver Mowat over certain questions affecting the rights of Ontario, he was soundly berated from end to end of the Dominion as the champion of the provinces. Sir Oliver Mowat was placed on a very high pedestal as a consequence of his constitutional victories. The attempt of the Liberal-Conservative party to pass remedial legislation in behalf of a Catholic minority in Manitoba—practically what is now proposed to be done, only in advance—was severely denounced by Sir Wilfrid Laurier as "coercion." Such attempts to hamstrung the Provincial Legislatures are bound to be resisted. As we have pointed out in previous issues, it is not a question of separate schools. It has not necessarily anything to do with the sectarian aspect of the case. Sectarian prejudices, it is true, have been aroused, and the widespread opposition to separate schools is asserting itself and to some extent confusing the issues. But the merits of that question are not involved. As a matter of fact, if the minority desire separate schools in the Northwest, the Legislatures of the new Provinces are bound to make provision for them. Why, as Mr. Haultain points out, should the Dominion Government assume that the Provinces will not do justice to the religious denominations in this respect as well as in all others? The Provinces have many other duties imposed upon them under the B. N. A. Act. These are defined in section 92 in numerous sub-sections. As well might the Dominion Government insert clauses in the Autonomy Bill directing the performances of each of these as to seek to direct the Provinces in respect to educational matters, over which they have exclusive control. A more fatal mistake could not have been imagined. The very fact that certain provisions are made in section 93 to protect the minorities and define methods of redress is proof that the Fathers of Confederation wished to avoid the re-opening of an old sore, every time a new province was formed. It was to avoid just such a crisis as has now arisen. With all the experience of what has transpired in Canada in connection with matters of a sectarian character one would have imagined that so astute a politician and statesman as Sir Wilfrid Laurier would have steered clear of complications by refusing to deal with the question of education at all in his bill. It only goes to show how powerful the influences were that tempted him into the path of great danger.

VANCOUVER ISLAND.

It must be especially gratifying to Victorians to note the optimistic views expressed by F. W. Morse, vice-president and general manager of the Grand Trunk Pacific railway, respecting the outlook for Vancouver Island. Mr. Morse is in a peculiarly advantageous position to give an opinion of value respecting the development of any given territory, especially when that territory is likely to be influenced by transportation extension. Mr. Morse says Vancouver Island has obviously a great future in a commercial sense. He remarks that the Island possesses within its areas very great material resources of the most valuable kind—minerals, coal, timber and fisheries—capable of development along the most comprehensive lines. Again, it is clear from Mr. Morse's observations that on the Pacific coast line Vancouver Island possesses a strategical position from a transportation standpoint of the utmost value. At the board of trade meeting the general manager of the new transcontinental line explained how important it was that speedy connection should be made with southern points when the Grand Trunk Pacific reached its ultimate Pacific terminus. In this attempt at getting speedy connection, Vancouver Island, he thought, would be an important factor, a railway from the north to Victoria furnishing quick methods of transportation south. Taken all in all Mr. Morse's statement respecting the outlook for Vancouver Island may be taken as a distinctly confirmatory note of the optimistic views held by many respecting the ultimate future of this Island.

PILOTAGE AFFAIRS.

Although the board of trade has seen fit to adopt the report of its special committee investigating the very important matter of local pilotage conditions and the possibility of their improvement in the interest of the trade of Victoria, and while all Victorians will look with favor upon suggestions of changes that promise to augment the shipping activity of the port and the volume of business, it is to be hoped that whatever action may be taken as a natural development of the board of trade crusade will be decided upon only after full, fair and impartial consideration of all evidence bearing upon the issue. There has been a suggestion that the present agitation had its birth in the recent investigation by commission of pilotage board affairs, and it is satisfactory to note that the board of trade committee has entered an explicit and positive denial in this connection, of inspiration which must otherwise have seriously prejudiced the value of its report. The pilots still urge, however, that there is another side to the question which has not received fair consideration, and it would be well that they be heard before the matter is taken to Ottawa, whence, if anywhere, action in the direction of a change must emanate. The position of pilotage affairs as the business man and citizen must view it in the light of present information appears very simple. It does not seem just or reasonable in the first place that vessels declining the pilot's service, by reason of ample knowledge on the part of their masters or special pilots of the waterways leading to the Royal Roads or Victoria's excellent docks, should nevertheless be compelled to pay half dues, for no service actually performed. It is not good business to ask payment for goods not delivered. At the same time one cannot but realize that Victoria labors at a disadvantage in bidding for shipping business, handicapped as she is by compulsory pilotage, while rival cities to the south are free of such serious handicap. The board of trade would seem to have acted wisely and in the public interest in moving toward reforms which suggest themselves as likely to greatly advance the business of the port. Such movements prove the board to be appreciative of its useful and proper functions, and increase public respect for a body which, with proper restriction of its representations to the lines of its legitimate activities, is a valuable factor in the promotion of commercial growth.

GAME LAW IMPROVEMENT.

General regret has been expressed by sportsmen throughout the province that the government has not seen fit to insert a clause in the proposed amendments to the Game Act requiring resident sportsmen to take out a license before killing game. It is felt that now it is practically assured that a game and forestry department will be formed, the imposition of a small license fee of say from $2.00 to $2.50 would go a long way towards the expense connected with the department and the carrying out of the Game Act. All sorts of laws may be passed, but unless they are strictly enforced they are so much waste paper. It requires money to enforce game laws, and not one real sportsman in this province would object to the license were he assured that the money would go into a fund for the better protection of game. The license may be objected to by some people as being class legislation. This argument cannot hold water, as in reality the non-imposition of a license is what constitutes class legislation in that the funds for enforcing the game laws, which only affect a small minority of the community, viz., sportsmen and hunters, will then be taken from the general revenue; whereas if a license is imposed sportsmen and others who hunt and fish will pay towards the enforcement of the laws for the preservation of the game for which they hunt and fish. Nearly all the states of the Union have a resident game license. The system has been a great success and there is no reason why it should not work equally well in British Columbia.

With respect to statements which have recently appeared in the local press anent the authority of the province to enact the legislation of last season providing a close season for trout continuing until the 25th of March, it is somewhat difficult to believe that the Attorney-General and his deputy can have been correctly understood in declaring that the provincial law is ultra vires and worth no more than waste paper. Upon such a constitutional question it is improbable that the law officer of the Crown would venture an off-hand opinion only to be interpreted as an invitation to all and sundry fishermen to set at defiance the statute law of British Columbia. It is possible that the Dominion law with respect to trout fishing overrides the provincial, albeit the local legislation is based upon the better understanding of home conditions and is more in the interest of fish and fishermen. But this cannot be determined by casual opinions even from the Attorney-General. The courts must decide, and it is to be hoped that at early opportunity will be taken, by the institution of proceedings against some offender, under the provincial act, to ascertain just what this legislation is worth.

HARRY'S MARRIED.

Harry once was popular, the life of every party;
Harry's tales were listened to, Harry's jests were cheered;
Harry's laugh infectious was considered bright and hearty,
Everybody watched for him until he had appeared!
Now the girls avoid him just as if a bore they feared!
Now they find him stupid and his conversation arid;
Now the eyes are listless to the face they once endeared—
Harry's married.

Harry once could count upon a half a dozen letters
Every single morning when the early mail got in;
Harry was imprisoned in a dozen dainty fetters—
(Harry wasn't quite so good as Harry might have been).
Now his plate is empty, and his correspondence thin,
The postman now is missing many missives that he carried.
Harry's face at breakfast lacks its customary grin—
Harry's married.

Harry once was telephoned to gay, impromptu dinners,
Always room for Harry and another extra chair,
Harry once was intimate with many pretty sinners,
Harry found an open door and welcome everywhere.
Now he's got a wife at home, there's no one seems to care;
All his old advances now are mercilessly parried.
Harry'd like to call again, but Harry doesn't dare—
Harry's married.

Harry once, on Christmas Day, had many a pretty present—
Pillows, pipes, and photographs, cigarettes and socks—
Every girl who knew him tried to make his birthday pleasant—
Slippers, soap, and shaving sets, Conchas by the box!
Now he smiles sardonic when the pitying postman knocks!
Just a card with "Greetings," that a day behind has tarried—
Greetings to Yourself and Wife," his old adorer mocks—
Harry's married.

Harry, to the married women, once was "interesting."
There he told his troubles, and they called him "foolish boy!"
Many other things they said were not of his requesting.
Now they fail to find in him a comfort and a joy.
Now the maid who trusted him has grown a little coy.
All the little love affairs with which her soul is harried
Now are secret sorrows, and they're not to be his toy!
Harry's married.

—Metropolitan Magazine.

NOT A QUESTION OF RELIGION.

Toronto Globe.

Premier Haultain declares that he would favor the continuance of the present system, and that he would be "averse to imposing any system upon a large body of citizens against which they entertain conscientious objections." Why not leave the question of education to him and his colleagues in the new provincial government? It belongs there by the terms of the Confederation Act. If it is dealt with at Ottawa there may develop opposition from the provincial governments, not because they would abolish separate schools, but because they would resent federal dictation in matters of provincial rights. If the people of Saskatchewan and Alberta want separate schools let them have them on their own motion and in the way provided by the constitution. If they do not want them any attempt at constitutional compulsion, even if it succeeds, would awaken antagonisms which would embitter local politics and be disastrous to the separate schools themselves. And for that proposition we can ask the support of Catholics and Protestants alike. It is not a question of religion or racial controversy. It involves the principle of provincial rights. On that ground all classes and creeds can stand together.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

DYNAMITE AS AN ATTRACTION.

Sir—I see various methods advocated in your columns for advertising the advantages of this city and surrounding country. Might I suggest that a most excellent send-off (in more ways than one, perhaps) would be to state that there is very often stored at the powder works, situated some four miles from the post office, large quantities of dynamite. A recent inspection by government showed some 70 tons, and that residents around Gordon Head, Cadboro Bay, etc., have recently petitioned the government to take steps for their protection.

ONE OF THE RESIDENTS.

Victoria, March 8, 1905.

GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC.

Sir—A letter in your morning's issue again brings up this important question for the consideration of your readers, and I think the time has come when a decided expression of public opinion should be obtained on it, and that no time should be lost. The question should be considered from a British Columbia point of view pure and simple; all parts of the Dominion will derive immediate benefit from the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific, with the exception of this province, unless construction commences at the western end, continuing east until it joins the road coming west. Rightly or wrongly, we are left out in the cold for some years unless the Grand Trunk can be induced to commence in the west and work east.

We are thus placed in the position of either arranging with the Grand Trunk to commence and continue construction at once through British Columbia, or abide the slow advent of the railway to the coast from the east. If the latter, we shall receive as much advantage from its construction as if the road was being built in Kamschatka.

Our province is just emerging from an epoch of financial deficits, a result brought about by a policy that could not help but be unpopular to the government, however perfect as a means of obtaining the object aimed at: but the fact remains that we are in a better financial position a great deal than we were eighteen months ago, and things are looking brighter. With the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific being energetically pushed from the coast eastward, and arrangements made for similar work of a few hundred miles in the south, not only would the province emerge from the years of depression as if by magic, but the government's exchequer would soon be overflowing from the impetus given to the general business of the country.

Now the question arises, how is this to be brought about? It is useless to rake up now things that have passed, which have placed us in the unfortunate position we are, but rather let us all join hands and endeavor to bring about now what we were so anxious for some little time ago. My idea is that we should look upon the application of the Grand Trunk Pacific for concessions in the same light as we would the application of any other corporation who should approach the government for assistance towards building a road through any part of British Columbia. If it was thought in the interest of the province, the government would be justified in giving it. The G. T. P. people are placed in a stronger position than an ordinary company would be, because they say we have incentive to build the road within a certain time, we shall, however, save a very large amount and make a very much better showing to our shareholders if we build from the east to the west; but if you will give us some concessions we will commence at the coast.

It is reported that they have asked for a land grand. I have always been in favor of giving (under reasonable conditions) land grants for the purpose of assisting the opening up of the country by railways where land is available; the arguments in favor of it are numerous, and I know are appreciated by a large number of people, and I could never see why British Columbia should not do what other parts of the Dominion have done in that regard, viz, give land where available. Those parts which have not had land to dispose of have either given so much cash per mile or a guarantee of interest on a certain amount per mile, in order to secure early construction and a more rapid settlement of their lands than would otherwise be the case.

The province is not in a position to incur large financial obligations, so there is nothing but land for us to offer. I quite agree with Mr. Lugrin's letter, and think that the Liberals ought to look at the matter from a British Columbia point of view, and should assist the government in arriving at an understanding with the Grand Trunk Pacific.

As far as the Socialists are concerned, I do not take it for granted that they are irrevocably opposed to land grants, but with certain provisions as to their administration, maximum price and taxation, would be inclined to support that policy; but if they are opposed to land grants, I suppose they will stick to their colors, as they have a perfect right to do. Those of them who occupy seats in the legislature appear to me, from the part they have taken in the business of the House, to be men of judgment and good common sense, and anxious to see the province progress, and willing to assist in bringing about what is today of such vital importance to the rapid advancement of our province.

I give you my views, Mr. Editor, for what they are worth; I have had no communication with either side of the House on this question, but at the same time I feel very strongly that his opportunity of bringing about great prosperity to our province should not be neglected, and that any idea of making political capital out of the situation should be frowned down by all parties, and that a very strong pull, and a pull all together, whether by Board of Trade meetings or public meetings, should be inaugurated to strengthen the hands of the government, and bring about an understanding between all the members of the legislature, if possible. I would suggest that a member of the opposition move and a government supporter second (if in order) a resolution to the effect that "This House is of the opinion that assistance in the shape of a land grant should be given to the Grand Trunk Pacific in consideration of their commencing construction at once from some point on the west coast of British Columbia and continuously working east to the eastern boundary."

E. DEWDNEY.

THE GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC.

Sir—It is believed by a large number of our public men that the general public is so anxious for the immediate commencement of construction in this province of the Grand Trunk Pacific railway that the government of the province will be prevailed upon to submit a bill granting a land subsidy to the company as an inducement to commence the opening of a portion of the province at an early date. There is cause to fear that this impression will grow as the days of the session wear on. Professional "lobbyists" and that nameless crew of hangers-on to the company's wishes are not idle in their efforts to disseminate all sorts of good promises to create "public opinion." Already this province has had its life's blood wasted in gifts, grafts and assistance to undertakings to swell the holdings and earnings of corporations and incidentally to bonus a class of men who, too lazy to work, have found it profitable to play their smooth and sleek arts in the corridors of our legislature and in other public places of resort. The work of this element has too long been voiced as "public opinion." The "booster" and hireling has had a happy and profitable time in the past, cajoling members with feasts, drinks, amusements and pleasant hours at the expense of the province and to the dishonor of public life. The time has come for members both Liberal, Conservative, Labor, and Socialist, to take some joint action to rid the legislative corridors of this "smooth" and "respectable" crew of land pirates. Not until their occupation is gone and their hopeless uselessness to corporations is exposed by no uncertain action, will the work of the legislature be freed of much that hampers them in their consideration of public affairs. The present government is well aware that the course of the Grand Trunk Pacific railway in attempting to "hold up" this province is an outrage, and all shades of political thought of our members should join in a memorial to Ottawa against this filibustering attempt on the remnants of our public resources. It might be of interest to inquire if the Grand Trunk Pacific company has made any attempted raids on the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba, or Quebec and the Maritime provinces.

HOWARD J. DUNCAN.

Vancouver, March 9, 1905.

THE GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC.

Sir—I have very carefully read your editorial of this morning on the Grand Trunk Pacific to discover what the principle is, which you think is more important than "the advantages to be gained by surrendering to business expediency." It is not the granting of a land subsidy, because you say that such a subsidy "under proper restrictions is wholly unobjectionable." It must therefore be involved in your opinion that a letter written by Mr. Hays to Senator Templeman was instrumental in electing seven Liberal members to the House of Commons. As one of the members was elected by acclamation, it is not easy to see what part Mr. Hays' letter played in securing him his seat. But to avoid useless discussion, suppose that we take for granted that if Mr. Hays had not written that letter, some Conservative members would have been elected in British Columbia. Let us proceed to clear the ground a little more. It will be admitted that the G. T. P. did not secure the execution of their contract with the government, nor its ratification by parliament through any representations, direct or indirect, as to when they would begin work anywhere. It will also be admitted that, as Mr. Hays wrote his letter at a time when it was not known that the House was to be dissolved in 1904, he could not have written it to affect the British Columbia elections. It must also be admitted that if Col. Prior had been elected in Victoria, your principle, based on the election of a "solid seven," would not have any existence. Your position is therefore reduced to this: Because Col. Prior was defeated, and a letter from Mr. Hays to Senator Templeman contributed to his defeat, the province ought not to enter into negotiations with the G. T. P. to secure the immediate beginning of work and the inauguration of a project for the colonization of our vast vacant areas. I take the liberty to doubt if Col. Prior would endorse such a position, and we know that very many of the most prominent Conservatives do not. Stripped of all circumlocution, your position seems to be that, the Conservatives having been defeated in the federal elections, there ought not to be any negotiations with the G. T. P., no matter how favorably they might result, that is, judged from the standpoint of "business expediency."

On the other hand, let us consider some of the things that might be secured by such negotiations. They are:

The immediate beginning of construction at the Pacific Coast;

The continuous prosecution of construction from this end as far as the summit of the Rockies;

The expenditure of a vast sum of money in this province with a minimum of competition from Eastern business houses;

The establishment of an active colonization department by the company;

Constant addition from year to year to the taxable property in the province;

The immediate concentration of the attention of immigrants, business men and capitalists upon this province;

A rapid increase in the population;

An immediate appreciation in the saleable quality of a very large area of the public lands, and consequently a great addition to the revenue; and

The rapid development of the whole Coast section of the province.

For myself I think that no aid ought to be given the company, unless:

The sale price of the land was fixed at government prices;

The company pledged itself, subject to its lands becoming taxable, to maintain an efficient colonization bureau; and

The lands are made taxable after a fixed period of years.

I submit, sir, that these things are a proper subject for negotiation, and if consummated would be far more beneficial to the province than any possible political advantage that either party can hope to gain by a refusal to co-operate in securing them.

CHARLES H. LUGRIN.

The Railways and the Public

Sir—I do not think it is too much to say that nothing on the subject of railway building and railway assistance appearing in the press of British Columbia in many years has been more cordially echoed by the mass of the public—who are not railway promoters or well paid agents, but merely in their several callings industrious workers for the prosperity of the province—than your recent articles denying the legitimacy of acquiescence in the hold-up proposals of the Grand Trunk Pacific made to the provincial government this present session. All are well aware that the assistance granted the G. T. P. by the government of Canada and ratified and endorsed by the whole people of the Dominion, equals at least three-quarters of the probable construction cost. And anyone with experience in railway building juggling is equally well aware that scientific bookkeeping will probably make the assistance fully parallel the actual construction expenditure. The invitation therefore for British Columbia to grant 15,000 acres per mile for the G. T. P. main line in this province, simply as the price of expedited construction from the western end, is so bald and unblushing a raid upon the resources of the province that it would be admirable for its audacity where it not so alarming in its character.

For it must bring British Columbians to their senses in realization of how far railway bonus grafting has gone in this province when any man or company of men would venture to propose such a gift of public resources with no substantial quid pro quo.

Not that the writer or any other fair-minded student of the part played by development railways in making the progress and settlement of new countries will deny the legitimacy and the proven advisability of substantial assistance to such new roads as will make tributary to our own country virgin resourceful areas within our borders. The history of the Kootenay and the abstract of its present contribution to provincial revenue is sufficient to point a lesson in this regard. But the profitable networking of the Kootenays is not by any main line—rather by development roads which well demonstrate the far-sighted wisdom of former Premier Turner in his railway policy carried into effect despite vociferous protests. Had the Grand Trunk Pacific promoters come to the province for aid in reasonable measure for their necessary contributary branch lines, opening up new areas of mineral, farming, stock-raising, or timbering industry, it would be quite another story, and such proposals would have been entitled at least to favorable examination and consideration. It would seem in this case, however, that it is a hold-up, not a business bargain that is aimed at. And thanks in large measure to the way in which the Colonist has laid bare the facts, it is not to be imagined that Premier McBride or his government will think further of defying public opinion by discussion of the Grand Trunk Pacific's one-sided proposition. I have heard it said that a gentleman identified with this company has boasted that he could easily "buy" sufficient votes among the members of the local legislature to force compliance with the hold-up order, and this again attests how far we have gone in political immorality in railway matters when such a suggestion is lightly treated as either fact or jest.

The truth is that in this province railway building and railway assistance have become the dominant influence of politics. Railway proposals based upon legitimate business principles in consequence are apt to receive scantiest consideration. Members are elected well in advance of their services being required—this one to insipiously but faithfully represent the interests of the C. P. R.—that one as the secret advocate of Great Northern policy. And the business railway builder who desires to BARN the reward of his enterprise out of the operation of a road developing new industries, receives indifferent attention. The legislators too often appear but puppets of the corporations, and this is growing so pronounced a condition in British Columbia that the signs of revolution are already in the air and Socialism is daily spreading its branches and adding to its membership because as yet it is the only organized protest against a state of affairs almost fatally inimical to the best provincial progress. The mass of the public recognizes the fallacies and impracticabilities of socialist doctrines as at present expounded, but the heart of socialism is right—it aims to keep provincial assets for provincial good, and therein must be commended even while it may err in striving to find the proper instruments with which to wage righteous battle.

Just at present several sections of British Columbia, of which Victoria is one, are singing the praises of the C. P. R., and deaf and blind to all other railway interests. The C. P. R. has the ear of the government, and is forcing an aggressive campaign in the legislature and with the government, chiefly for what insofar as the present interests of British Columbia is concerned, principally to kill a project which, analyzed by business standards, is obviously the best for British Columbia of any in immediate view. The granting of fair assistance to a provincial road, to create new provincial business of large volume, and make it tributary to provincial merchants, is something for which all patriotic British Columbians would hold up both hands at any time. And this is the proposition of the McLean Brothers of Vancouver, who during the past eleven years have stood by their Coast-to-Kootenay railway project. They have given the government and the country a business proposition, not a political one. They have not adopted the tactics of filling seats in the legislature with their friends. They have not sought in assistance which it cannot be clearly shown will be manifoldly repaid the country so soon as the road is built. They have expressed a willingness to accept a guarantee of their bonds in lieu of cash or land subsidy, because their one desire is to build the road most needed of any for the development of a rich and resourceful section of the province—knowing that out of the operation of the road, which they themselves will continue to control, and with which will crosscut all continental systems, they have a substantial fortune assured.

The trouble with British Columbians is apathy. Over in the neighbor states business men of all grades feel it their duty as citizens to be in touch with what is going on in railway policy. And being well informed, no general public would have consented to have a bona fide development and business-creating proposition such as the Coast-to-Kootenay project of the Messrs. McLean so long made the literal plaything of politicians swayed hither and thither by the "arguments" of foreign corporation interests. If the McLean Brothers are granted even a guarantee of bonds they will build a British Columbia road at once. They will operate that road as a British Columbia highway of trade. And its profits will go into British Columbia pockets—not aid to swell the fortunes of Eastern multi-millionaires who already chuckle at the plumpness of the British Columbia goose so often close plucked for their special benefit. If Premier McBride and his government aim to leave their mark in British Columbia history by statesmanlike accomplishment, here is a good place to begin. The questions: Will the road justify in returns to the public treasury the support asked, and will the granting of required aid be wholly in the interest of the public? can only be honestly answered with a straight affirmative.

To revert once again to the proposal of the Grand Trunk Pacific—they have a right to ask, while British Columbia has no right to grant. Does it not suggest itself to the casual student of political affairs that were this province to seriously consider the further assistance of a Dominion-sided road of the character of the G. T. P., a precedent would be created which might be repeatedly cited by the federal authorities in future time to the infinite disadvantage of British Columbia and of the extension of its agencies of traffic and development.

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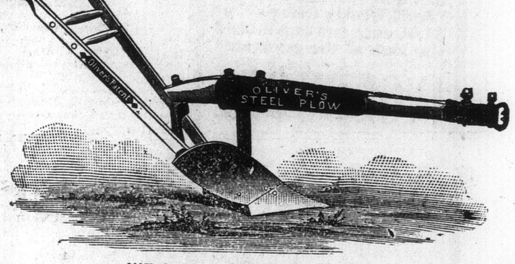

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