

The Colonist.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 27.

THE SEALING AWARD.

The award of the sealings commissioners will be a serious disappointment to the sealers, but the best way to do in such matters is to accept the inevitable and close the matter at once. We are unable to understand the principle upon which interest has not been allowed. It is bad enough for the sealers to be put to a loss aggregating \$144,000 without being kept out of their money for years and put to a very large expense. It may be that the loss of the interest will have to be borne with as good a grace as possible, but we submit that the Dominion government ought to reimburse the individual sealers in their legal expenses. We do not know what these amount to, but they must be very considerable, and if they are not refunded the victory will be a very barren one to the sealers individually, whatever it may be to the country. There is some little satisfaction in the knowledge that the amount is more than the Canadian government offered to accept in full, for this shows that the demand was entirely reasonable and that thereof of the United States to pay it was wholly unwarranted. We hope the amount will be promptly paid over. There is no use in complaining; for undoubtedly the commissioners have done what they thought was right in the premises. They are both able men and they approached the consideration of the question in the best possible spirit. The case was very ably argued on both sides, and we cannot very well raise any objection to the decision reached, for not only were the claims of the sealers presented with great force, but the Canadian representative, who might naturally be expected to take a Canadian view of the case, is a gentleman of great force of character and more than ordinary ability. On most questions we would be prepared to accept the decision of Hon. Mr. Justice King as a fair one, and he is one of the very best men to whom we would impute any disposition to swerve from his conception of what was right. Therefore, while repeating our regret that interest was not allowed and our inability to understand without further light why it was not, we think the country is to be congratulated upon the result of the inquiry.

We urge, however, that the point made above ought not to be lost sight of and that the Dominion government should either take prompt action to reimburse the sealers in their actual outlay for legal expenses, or else supplement the award by an amount equivalent to reasonable interest.

A Washington despatch received late last night puts the award in a different light to that shed upon it from Ottawa, intimating that the sealers have been allowed interest, but that their claims for compensation for the stoppage of their legitimate business have been rejected. The Canadian government having fully endorsed these claims, would no doubt be equally ready to compensate the sealers in respect to them as in the matter of interest.

THE REINDEER EXPEDITION

It is suggested that the telegrapher who sent forward the despatch about that reindeer expedition to Circle City, *to be in Klondyke on the way, made a mistake and that it is 300,000 pounds not 3,000,000 that the United States secretary of war proposes to send in. Even if this is the case, the proposition is not less absurd. There is no choice between two things that are impossible. It is as absurd to attempt the one as the other.*

The reindeer are to come from Lapland. It is now near the last of December. Granting that a man can go to Lapland and immediately on his arrival pick up 1,000 reindeer, an extremely doubtful thing of itself, the next question would be one of food. Reindeer live on moss. Possibly they might live on other foods for a time, and in some individual cases for a very considerable time; but we venture to say that no one, who has had any experience in the ways of these animals, would undertake to transport a thousand of them from Lapland to Chilkat Pass and guarantee to deliver a single animal alive. There is an impression that reindeer can live off anything and under any circumstances, that they are remarkably hardy, and can fly over the snow with almost any load that is put upon them or to which they are attached. The facts are quite otherwise. Reindeer are rather delicate in their nature. They can stand cold weather, and they live on moss; but an animal that lives on moss does so, for the same reason that dogs delight to bark and bite: "it is their nature to," and it refuses to thrive on other fare.

Suppose the reindeer are purchased and start from Lapland on a steamer, they may reach Chilkat in about sixty days; that is to say, if the steamer loaded with the deer were ready to start from Lapland by January 1st, they would be at the head of Lynn Canal by the first of March. By the time they were unloaded and the train was made up it would be at least March 10th, so that date we might expect to see the following expedition set out for Circle City: Five hundred sledges, each drawn by two deer and accompanied by a driver, that is, five hundred drivers; also a mil-

itary escort of we have forgotten how many men, but that is immaterial for they would never get anywhere. Let us suppose that each reindeer team would draw 400 pounds of provisions besides blankets, cooking "tools" and other necessary impedimenta, and the arms of the soldiers. This is more than they would haul, but we do not wish to estimate too low. From Chilkat to Circle City is upwards of a thousand miles. Allowing for delays of various kinds, a liberal estimate for the loaded reindeer day after day would be twenty miles a day, that is they would be fifty days reaching Circle City, and as there would be no sense in their remaining there, it would take them as long to come back, including the time for unloading and resting. That is to say, the five hundred drivers and the men in charge of the expedition, who would probably number at least twenty, including cooks, would have to be fed for one hundred days. Five hundred and twenty men in these cold latitudes would require at least four pounds of something to eat in a day, which would come to 400 pounds a man. Multiplying this by the number of men—520—we have 208,000 pounds required to provision the relief party. Now the total weight to be carried by the reindeer teams, each team consisting of two deer, would be 200,000 pounds, of which 10 per cent. must be deducted for the weight of the packages in which the goods are carried. This would leave 180,000 pounds of provisions, or 28,000 pounds less than the relief expedition would itself require. Whence it follows that unless the reindeer drivers and the officers and cooks could be persuaded to eat the soldiers, and the soldiers would consent to be eaten, the relief expedition would itself have to be relieved.

We do not think that we have in any way mistated the facts of this case, but on the contrary believe that no man who knows anything whatever about reindeer and their capacity as draft animals will dispute what we have said above. For the reason that the whole project is an impossibility one would naturally look for some sinister motive behind it; but we do not know that there is any. It may rather be a somewhat characteristic piece of bonhomie, which experience has shown that the Washington government is not above.

CHRISTMAS.

Perhaps the herald angels never sang above the hills of Palestine. Perhaps no wise men came from the East to worship the Babe in the Bethlehem manger. Perhaps no star appeared to guide those who sought the promised Messiah. All may be myth; all may be poetry; all may be the adaptation of some of the legends which have come down to us from the childhood of the race. But it matters very little, for ever since the day whose anniversary we commemorate, an anthem of peace and good will has been echoing throughout the earth, the wisest of men have knelt in adoration before the name of the Infant Jesus, a star, more resplendent than any that has ever shone in the vault of Heaven, has guided humanity to a Saviour.

No doubt it is a pious fiction that assigns this day as the anniversary of the birthday of Our Lord. There may be ostensibly some warrant for it, but there is no reason to suppose that the early Christians recognized or observed it. They were more concerned with the transcendent fact of His death and resurrection. To be born is the common lot of all, as also it is to die; but to rise from the grave, to demonstrate that man is superior to death—this in an age of intense materialism was enough to think about enough to inspire men with faith and hope. Later when the Gospel was preached to the Teutonic tribes and those other races, which came out of the North with a force as resistless as the glaciers which centuries before overspread Europe, it became necessary to adjust the new cult to the customs of the new converts. What better plan could be suggested than to make the Yule Tide holiday a Christian festival? It was appropriate in a wider sense than that appeared at first sight. The Yule Tide feast is in celebration of the turning of the sun from his course towards the South, that is to speak in popular language. To fully understand its significance in this respect we must give our imagination a little rein.

The terrors of the Ice Age were upon the world. Man had lost the Paradise of the Tertiary Age and wandered in darkness and cold. Tradition had preserved the story of the matchless nights of the Arctic Eden and of the festivals with which the return of the long absent sun was greeted. We can readily believe that the few survivors of the Frost Giants, to use the language of the Icelandic Sagas, would hasten to commemorate in some special way the annual loosing of the bands of winter, which seemed to promise that some day in the perhaps far distant future its sway would be wholly broken and Eden would be restored. Thus we see that the Yule Tide feasts were to the North-ern races more than a mere expression of joy over present benefits; they were an earnest of greater glories to come. It required hardly a change of names to convert Yule Tide into Christmas, and many curious features of the modern holiday attest that the change has not yet been complete. It does not detract in the least from the significance and the glory

of the feast to remember that it is the great day of rejoicing of all Northern races, and has been observed by them in one guise or another since a day so remote that the most ancient records do not tell of it, but leaves us to puzzle out fragments of its history from the rocks and gravel beds.

The significance of Christmas is that there is hope in life. Its observance ought to inspire us with the sublimest courage. The sentiment of the day has power to penetrate beneath the hardest of all external, to flourish under what seem to be the most adverse circumstances. This is a so-called practical age. We are nothing nowadays, so we say, if not practical. We profess to look at everything from the standpoint of the ledger. We affect to despise anything except what we can measure with our yardstick or reckon by our arithmetic. Yet we all keep Christmas as if it were a sacred thing in the history of the world. Our newspapers issue Christmas supplements, and if Christmas were of them as grotesque as the Christmas Waits of the Olden Time, they are a compliment to the Christmas sentiment. They are printed because the people want them. Our singers write Christmas carols and the people sing them—a revival of a very ancient and delightful custom. The harshness of Puritanism, which once forbade the observance of the day as a heinous sin, but compromised between its perverted conscience and its humanity in keeping Thanksgiving, has opened its eyes to the grand old holiday. The reason is that the world is getting better. The Christ-spirit is gaining ground. The world is more than ever following His star and more willing to bow in adoration before His cradle.

We are not unmindful of the fact that never before in the history of the world were so many men under arms or the seeds of terrific conflict more widely sown; but while this is the case, it is also true that never before were men and nations more influenced by the spirit of Christianity.

Personal ambition counts for far less than it did a hundred years ago. The masses are gaining recognition of their rights. There is developing a public sentiment to which even the most powerful individuals must bow. The voice of the people is not yet the voice of a god, but there is more divinity in it than ever before. And this is due more to the influence of Him whose natal day we commemorate than to any other single cause. Nineteen centuries ago He said to those who gathered round Him, questioning and marveling at His wisdom: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." It is by the truth as taught by Him that the world is being gradually emancipated.

AN EXTRAORDINARY COURSE.

When certain statements, for which libel proceedings are now being carried on, were printed in the weekly paper in which they originated, they were accompanied by the declaration that they were made with a full sense of responsibility. This declaration added weight to them. It was all that raised them above the mere Billingsgate. When anyone makes grave charges and declares his readiness to stand by them, he is entitled to have what he says regarded as sincere, even if it may be grossly erroneous. When, therefore, we find the periodical, that made the statements referred to with such a florid of trumpets, now seeking to evade all responsibility, we are warranted in assuming that the bold words were hollow, and we employed only to give weight to something that otherwise would not be worthy of a moment's thought. When a journal makes such a statement as that above referred to, it invites prosecution; and the many course under such circumstances is to waive all technicalities and attempt a justification.

We do not care as a rule to make any observations having even an indirect bearing upon a subject of litigation, and would say nothing now if a sense of public duty did not make it compulsory. Are the public to be treated to a repetition of what has been going on in the police court for the last day or two, or are those who declared themselves responsible for the articles complained of going to come forward and take that responsibility? We express no opinion whatever upon the evidence as far as it has gone. To do that would be highly improper. What we wish to induce is a distinct avowal by the responsible parties of their relation to the article referred to and a manly acceptance of the consequences.

We shall have more to say upon this point by and by, but hope to be able to chronicle that there has been no further evasion of responsibility and that there will be no attempt to make a scapegoat of any one whose sole complicity in the transaction has probably been to earn his salary by following out as best he could the policy of his paper.

The Wellington Enterprise thinks that greater latitude should be shown attorneys from the other provinces who desire to practice in British Columbia. This is a matter upon which there is a wide difference of opinion. There are cases in which the restriction seems absurd; but it must be borne in mind that regulations of this nature are made for the majority, not for the minority. It is desirable that some safeguard should be thrown around admission to the bar, if the law is to remain a learned and honorable profession.

The Columbian calls the attention of the Colonist to the fact that it credited to the Nanaimo Review a paragraph on redistribution which, in point of fact, appeared in the Wellington Enterprise. In so doing it says that the publication by the Colonist of a quotation from another paper is a tacit approval of it. We do not wish this idea to get abroad. The quotations made by the Colonist under the heading "The Canadian Press" are not to be understood as expressing the views of this paper, but only as illustrating the trend of public thought on the questions dealt with. When the Colonist desires to approve of the opinions expressed by a contemporary it will say so.

The Post-Intelligencer is very angry at the Colonist for exposing the reindeer-relief fraud, and of course calls the editor of this paper names. Now let us suppose for argument's sake that the editor of the Colonist is a sounder of the deepest dye, will the Post-Intelligencer explain how that melancholy fact would enable 1,000 reindeer to carry 3,000,000 pounds of provisions to Circle City this winter or any winter? The Post-Intelligencer's sleep seems to be disturbed by dreams of the Colonist. We would like to say to it that only "scrub papers" make a practice of referring to the editors of other papers.

The News-Advertiser sneers at the Wellington Enterprise as a paper of whose existence not one tenth part of its readers are aware. This is certainly a very clever observation. We suppose that the Enterprise could reply in the same words with equal truth. How many people out of Vancouver ever stop to ask what the News-Advertiser thinks about anything, or know of its existence? Our contemporary should be ashamed of such an exhibition of coddishness.

We are in receipt of a letter from Doaktown, in central New Brunswick, in which the writer asks for some copies of the Colonist, and says that the people are flooded with Seattle papers. The weak point with our British Columbia people is that they do not make nearly as much use of their newspapers as they ought to. There is not a paper published in the province that might not be sent abroad with advantage to the community.

The Toronto Board of Trade has moved in the matter of the customs facilities at the passes, and takes precisely the same ground as that taken by the British Columbia Board of Trade. Some of our contemporaries have lately taken exception to the retention by the Victoria Board of its old name; but they must concede that it is fighting the battles of the province in splendid style.

"VERITAS" is informed that only under exceptional circumstances will the Colonist permit the affairs of private corporations to be discussed in its columns and then only when the correspondent sends his letter to be printed over his own signature.

The Fort Steele Prospector expresses a fear that it might weary and disgust its readers. If the readers aforesaid can stand the three columns of abuse which the Prospector showers upon Col. Baker, we think it need not fear that anything which it can say hereafter will weary or disgust them.

We have found a good deal of fault with the Toronto Globe over its hostility for about fighting the battle of Canada for the Yukon trade, and are glad now to be able to say that it has reversed its policy of silence and is doing some very effective work.

Mr. TARTS says he is in the cabinet as the representative of the Conservatives. If this is the case, we think he may resign as soon as he likes, and that those whom he says he represents will not shed a tear.

The Comox News says there must be something wrong when a married woman prefers the society of some other man to that of her husband. Doubtless; but it is not possible that the fault may be with the husband?

The news that the Passes are closed by snow is not a matter of surprise. All along the Coast range the winter months are marked by heavy storms, and to climb over elevations under such circumstances is a pretty serious business.

A sign displayed in a Fort street window reads, "Keys fitted in any part of the city." Will the owner of the sign undertake to fit a key into the city government and unlock the good roads problem?

The Columbian says it does not pretend to be an authority on the English language. No one is, neighbor, except the Victoria Times. It is strong on "language," almost rank in fact.

In order that the employees of the Colonist may enjoy Christmas, there will be no paper issued from this office to-morrow; but an issue will appear on Monday.

Our evening contemporary feels a little sore about everything nowadays. We hope it will have a merry Christmas.

Rigby waterproof pea-jackets, pants and smox. Very heavy. B. Williams & Co.

THE CANADIAN PRESS.

HOPE IT IS TRUE.
The district is on the eve of a boom that promises to be of great proportion, and which means great expansion and growth for the entire province, and in which even the neighboring provinces will share.—Rossland Miner.

AFTER MANY DAYS.
Of the three routes, the one by the Stickeen river and Teslin lake is regarded the best. The trip from Victoria to Fort Wrangel, at the mouth of the Stickeen river, a distance of 750 miles, is made in large and comfortable ocean steamers. At Wrangel passengers are transferred to river-steamers, of which there will be half a dozen ready for service when the river opens about the end of April, and the trip up the river to Telegraph Creek, 150 miles, is made without any iron boats. Then pack trains will take the outfit to Teslin lake, 120 miles. The country between Telegraph Creek and Lake Teslin is quite level. Steamers are now being built for service on the Stickeen river, but for the next few months prospectors will have to take to small boats after crossing the lake, going down the Hootalinia to its junction with the Lewes river. By this route the prospectors have a clear run from Lake Teslin to Dawson City.—Toronto Globe.

BY WAY OF VARIETY.
Mrs. Scrape—My husband and I agreed the day we were married to have no quarrels. Friend—Have you lived up to it? Mrs. Scrape—Well, I have; but I don't want to quarrel with you. Friend—Why not? Mrs. Scrape—Well, you know I'm a stranger in this town and not used to your customs; but somebody was telling me that whenever a young man saw a girl home here he was supposed to kiss her good-night. Is this true? Friend—Well, you just try it and see. Mrs. Scrape—Well, I tried it and I found that I heard that farmer paid his help less than some wheeder they worked or not; so I went to work for him. Sunset—The fellow played sick, I suppose? Weary—Well, yes—until I found out that he never paid nobody; he was a dead beat.

SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS.
"One of the Broken Brigades." This is a story of Western life by Olive Phillips-Wolley. It is strongly written and extremely readable. The scene is laid for the most part in British Columbia and the Northwest, and the plot deals with character and a type of life which are all too familiar. The young Englishman, who tries pioneer life on a British Columbia farm, finds out about the business as he very well can, is an individual whom all of us have met. The author sketches the mirror up to nature, with no disposition to spare the feelings of those whose general character he portrays. The plot of the novel is in a new country, where so many careers are closed by unexpected tragedies. The book has had a large sale in typical of a new country, where a large circle of readers in this country. It is a work of words, for we have not before had so plain a picture drawn of one phase of our Canadian life. It is not all complimentary by any means, but it does not follow from this that it is in any way a literary point of view, there are some evidences of haste to be noted, which the author would do well to amend in future editions, and there is rather too severe a literalness in some of his descriptions. The story bears evidence of great power, and will lead those who read it to look eagerly for the next production from the same pen.

"The Year Book of British Columbia." Agreeably to our promise yesterday we make a second reference to this work. It includes 600 pages of reading matter besides the index. The first section is devoted to a historical review, in which connecting the early voyages, the journeys across the plains, the fur trading system, the early history of the province, the gold excitement, and a variety of other subjects are dealt with. In this part of the book Mr. Gosnell has had the benefit of the assistance of Sir Henry Crease, and Messrs. J. W. McKay, H. F. Hobson, and R. P. McFicking, each of whom contribute original articles. A very useful chapter is that dealing with Pacific Coast dates. There is also an exceedingly interesting chapter on the names of places. The second portion of the book deals with such subjects as can be grouped under the head "Parliamentary and Judicial." There is not a subject coming under these very comprehensive heads which does not appear to have been treated. The Municipal system, the Educational system and the Provincial health laws are each given a department. Then follows a chapter on the Indians, one on the Physical Characteristics of the province, in which the animals and birds of British Columbia are also dealt with. The Forests, the Fisheries, Agriculture, Mines and Mining, Social Conditions, Trade and Finance, Railway Enterprises and the Canadian Yukon are also each given a chapter. There are marginal index notes, which will greatly aid the reader in finding any desired information. The amount of work represented by this book is very great. The matter seems to be arranged in very admirable form. It is just such a book as one might wish to have if he wanted to ascertain anything about the province. It has not been our good fortune ever to have had access to anything of the kind more complete and more conveniently arranged. If it were written, so that many of its pages can be read with interest apart from their value as a compendium of information about the province.

It is announced that an advance of 50 cents per ton will be made in the retail price of coal on Monday next.

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THE RAID UP

Russian Money Provisions of Port Arthur for Chinese?

Great Britain and Lively Interest and Also Affected

LONDON, Dec. 23.—The London Times says that the Russian government is provisioning Port Arthur for the Chinese. The article says that the Russian government is provisioning Port Arthur for the Chinese. The article says that the Russian government is provisioning Port Arthur for the Chinese.

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