The Colonist.

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IMPERIAL TRANSPORTATION

Testimony of the most valuable and important character supporting the position of those who urge persistent agitation on the part of the people of Vancouver Island for the bridging of Seymour Narrows, is to hand in an article in the London Times dealing with the proposed Newfoundland route to Canada. It seems a most extraordinary circumstance that such apathy should prevail here in regard to this matter at a time when experts in transportation are pointing out constantly that the great systems of the future will certainly be compelled to utilize those portions of the continent projecting farthest into the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Vancouver island is the one point on the Pacific seaboard which is necessarily involved in the plans for improving the great Imperial highway of the Empire. This is demonstrated by the arguments constantly presented by the greatest authorities in the world on the subject of transportation. For instance, the article before us from the London Times, says, referring to the proposed Newfoundland route to Canada: "The proposal involves in the first place the establishment of a line of fast steamers running between a British port on the eastern shore of Newfoundland, the construction of a broad gauge line of railway across the colony, and a steamer service between a port on the west and a Canadian port.

Elaborate calculations have been made showing that a very appreciable saving of time would be effected between this country and all the great centres in Canada and the United States, and beyond to the Pacific coast, Australia, New Zealand and Japan." Now, if in the foregoing excerpt Vancouver island is substituted for Newfoundland, a striking analogy is presented in respect to the strategic importance of the two places. In view of this, will we be charged with dreaming dreams in saying that it is not in any sense inopportune to ask that the bridging of Seymour Narrows may be considered within the realm of practical things? We append a portion of the London Times' article:

"There is a gratifying consensus of opinion that it is in the interest of the Empire that its different portions should, in the language of the resolution unanimously adopted by the Imperial Conference at its final sitting, "be connected by the best possible means of mail communication, travel, and transportation." It is, too, common ground that the first and most important link of this Imperial chain of communication connect Great Britain with the Dominion of Canada. At first sight the most direct and the most obvious means of forging this link appears to be by the establishment of a fast service of steamers between a British and a Canadian port; but there is an alternative scheme, which, while leaving Great Britain and Canada at the terminals of the chain, would, as its supporters claim, not only without injury to either British or Canadian interests, but with positive advantages to both, include Newfoundland, our oldest colony, as an integral part of the plan. There is reason to believe that this scheme was formally brought to the notice of the Home Government and of the Colonial Premiers by Sir Robert Bond, and its claims will, no doubt, meet with the fullest consideration at the hands of the comittee of experts to whom Mr. Lloyd-George suggested that all the proposals put forward should be referred. In Newfoundland the scheme has been fully and exhaustively discussed in both Houses of the Legislature, and has met with the unanimous and enthusiastic support of the entire population, from the Governor downwards. The proposal has a twofold aspect. It involves, in the first place, the establishment of a line of fast steamers running between a British port and a port on the eastern shore of Newfoundland, the construction of a broad-gauge line of railway across the colony, and a steamer service between a port on the west coast and a Canadian port.

The terminal ports in Newfoundland have been selected at Green Bay on the east coast and at Bay of Islands on the west coast, and the length of the connecting railway is 85 miles. The contractors have two years in which to begin the work, and that must be completed within five years from the confirmation of the agreement by the Legislature. The service is to be weekly, and on the Atlantic section boats of not less than 17 knots must be employed, though it is contemplated that steamers of much higher speed will be used. The contractors are also given the right, within certain specified dates, of continuing the line through the Northern Peninsula, tunnelling under the Straits of Belle Isle, and building a railway in that portion of Labrador which is under the jurisdiction of the Newfoundland government, to the frontier of the Dominion of Canada. No condition is imposed as to the choice of termina. ports in Great Britain or Canada, and the contractors are free to select such ports on either side of the Atlantic as may offer the greatest facilities for the service. It is understood that on the Canadian side a port in the province of Gaspe may be selected, but other ports are under consideration. On this side several ports, both in Ireland and in England are receiving attention, but it is not without significance that during the recent visit of the Colonial Premiers to Bristol both Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir Robert Bond made pointed reference to the ancient connection between the western port and the colonies they represented. The most obvious criticism of the proposals advocated by Sir Robert Bond is that the Newfoundland scheme involves a break in the journey across the Atlantic. It is recognized that until the Belle Isle Strait and Labrador route is established the Newfoundland route cannot offer the same facilities for transportation as would a direct steamship route between a British and a Canadian port, and for that reason, Sir Robert Bond and his supporters at present confine their claim to providing the best route for the conveyance of mails and passengers. Elaborate calculations have been made, showing that a very appreciable saving of time would be effected between this country and all the great centres in Canada and the United States, and beyond to the Pacific coast, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. These calculations will, no doubt, in due course be subjected to critical examination at the hands of the expert commissioners to be appointed by the home and colonial governments.

"AT THE FOOT OF THE THRONE."

The Times says that there is no foundation for the statement that Sir Wilfrid Laurier "has opposed the case of British Columbia" as presented to the Colonial Secretary. The Colonist did not assert that he did. It said that if the claims of British Columbia were not given consideration at the hands of the Colonial Office it would be because of the influence of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, a statement which we have not the least hesitation in repeating, because we are satisfied, as every man in Canada is satisfied, that if Sir Wilfrid should intimate to the Colonial Secretary that he was content to have the subject inquired into, an inquiry would at once be ordered. Until we know what disposition has been made of Mr. McBride's application we will be unable to say just in what direction the influence of the Federal Premier has been exerted; but if the Times is correct in saying that he simply laid the resolution of the Canadian Parliament before that minister and expressed a hope that effect would be given to it, he has assumed an attitude of hostility to British Columbia. The Associated Press telegrams from London do not bear out the statement of the Times. They said that Mr. McBride had presented the case of the province to the Colonial Secretary and that Sir Wilfrid had replied on behalf of the Dominion. We assume that the Times has no other information than this. If it has it has carefully excluded it from its columns. The Colonist is only able to take the view of the proceedings which is warranted by telegrams from disinterested press correspondence, and these convey the impression that Sir Wilfrid Laurier has distinctly and specifically opposed Mr. McBride in seeking to secure something like a fair measure of justice for this province, and if this is the case, and the Colonial Office refuses to investigate the merits of the question, the only conceivable reason will be that Sir Wilfrid Laurier has personally opposed Mr. McBride's application. We shall not be surprised if this proves to be the case. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's political future is in the hands of Quebec, and he dare not accord justice to British Columbia for fear that Quebec would demand an equivalent, and to comply with such a demand from the latter would be to invite the hostility of every one of the eastern provinces. This is the explanation of the words "final and unalterable" in the resolution which he laid before the Canadian and now submits for the consideration of the British Parliament. British Columbia is being sacrificed in order that Quebec may be kept in line.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier can offer one excuse for any unfairness which he may display towards this province. We are represented at Ottawa by seven Liberals in the House of Commons and two Liberals in the Senate. If either of these gentlemen has at any time extended his hand in an effort to forward the interests of the province in this behalf there is no evidence of the fact before the public. When the Inter-provincial Conference was in session, and when Mr. McBride was endeavoring to secure some measure of justice for the province, Mr. Templeman was in Ottawa looking after the affairs of his department. So far as the published reports show, he took no part whatever in the affairs of the conference. Other cabinet ministers were present, but the representative in the cabinet of the only province which had a special claim to present for consideration was conspicuous by his absence. In view of his inaction and that of his colleagues from this province in the House of Commons and the two Liberal senators, it can at least be claimed on behalf of Sir Wilfrid Laurier that in his unwillingness to see that justice is done to British Columbia he has the tacit support of Mr. Templeman, the "solid seven" and Senators Riley and Bostock.

The Times tells us that it is "palpably false and dishonest" to say that it is proposed to alter the terms of union in a manner prejudicial to the interests of this province. The Colonist said this, and it repeats the statement. So far as the changes relating to all the provinces go, British Columbia is not unjustly treated, but when it is proposed to amend the British North America Act by inserting a provision forever barring this province from making a demand in keeping with its exceptional claims, we say that the change will be vastly to its prejudice. We are, of course, not in a position to say how the Colonial Secretary will regard this matter. If Sir Wilfrid Laurier tells him that, notwithstanding the unanswerable case that has been made out for the province, substantial justice has been done by increasing the annual allowance from Ottawa by $100,000 a year for ten years, he may allow himself to be influenced by the Canadian Premier's opinion; and that is exactly how the case stands. Our claim is before the Colonial Office, or, as the phrase is, "at the foot of the throne," and it will be heard upon its merits, unless Sir Wilfrid Laurier interposes his influences to prevent its being so heard. If it is not prejudicial to this province to have an imperial act passed declaring that the comparative pittance temporarily offered by the majority of the provincial premiers shall be a final and unalterable settlement of the claims of this province for exceptional treatment because of conditions of a permanent character, then the Colonist is wrong and the Times is right. The Colonist has on its side of the case the whole people of British Columbia. We will permit the Times to say who, besides itself, hold that such a change in the terms of union will not be prejudicial to the province.

CHEAP INSULTS

The Montreal Herald thinks it has done a very clever thing in comparing Mr. McBride's visit to London in the interests of this province with that of the Indian chiefs, who went last summer to see the King, and of course the Victoria Times is so charmed with the insulting inference that it must needs reproduce it with comments of its own. Nothing so delights the heart of the Liberal organ in this city as cheap sarcasm, but we confess to surprise that a newspaper of respectability, like the Montreal Herald, should feel itself warranted in making such observations. If the union of the Canadian provinces is ever to be one of hearts and sentiment there must be an end of the miserable spirit animating such references as that of the Herald. Mr. McBride has gone to the legislature on a mission sanctioned by the great majority of the people of British Columbia. He has gone to promote a claim upon which there is no difference of opinion among the people of British Columbia. He is in London seeking for justice, which was denied the province at Ottawa. He may fail. We have no means of ascertaining whether or not he is likely to succeed; but we know that if he does fail, if by reason of the unwillingness of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to consent to the question being reopened before the Colonial Office, Mr. McBride returns empty-handed, there will be a profound feeling from one

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end of this province to the other that British Columbia has been treated with gross injustice, and we do not believe this will be lessened in any degree by such ill-advised utterances as that in which the Herald has seen fit to indulge.

The Herald in the article wherein the insulting reference is made, says that doubtless Mr. McBride can make out a good case for exceptional treatment, and it adds "that the province is entitled to a good deal more than the others was never disputed." It professes to think that the allowance of $100,000 a year for ten years was a very handsome offer. The province of British Columbia does not think so, and if Mr. McBride had accepted any such sum, the loudest condemnation would have emanated from the Liberal party in the province, which is committed to the proposition that the exceptional relief must not only be large but permanent.

The Herald states that Mr. McBride said he was going to the foot of the throne but has got no further than the office of the Colonial Secretary. We ask the Herald in all seriousness if it thinks this a remark that ought to be made in its columns about the premier of another province. Does the Herald believe that Mr. McBride expected to present a petition to the King in person? If it does not, and it is hardly supposable that it is so ignorant as to hold any such opinion, for even the Times felt obliged to admit that it did not think so, although it had said so over and over again; but if the Herald does not think so, what does it mean by seeking to create the impression among its readers that the Premier of British Columbia is in London seeking a personal audience with His Majesty upon the question of better terms? The Herald should be ashamed of itself. It should be above the petty nastiness of endeavoring to place a provincial premier in a false light. There are thousands of readers of the Herald, who will believe that Mr. McBride went to London to lay his case before the King, but was unable to get any further than the office of the Colonial Secretary; whereas the Herald knows, or at least ought to know, that no colonial premier would for one moment expect to approach His Majesty personally on any such subject, but would simply present his case to His Majesty's Ministers through the proper channel, which is the Colonial Office. If the Herald was familiar with the history of Canada it would know that on a previous occasion a claim from British Columbia was placed "before the foot of the throne" precisely as Mr. McBride has placed the case, which is in his charge. Justice was done the province then, at least to some extent, and if justice is not done now, it will solely be because Sir Wilfrid Laurier has interposed his great influence with the Imperial government to defeat our claim.

ISLAND MINERAL DEPOSITS

On Sunday the Colonist made the announcement that at a meeting of the Richard III mine shareholders a dividend of 2 1-2 per cent was declared. The other day news was received of the discovery of a valuable lead of gold-copper ore in the vicinity of Quatsino Sound. These two facts will awaken renewed interest in the mineral deposits of Vancouver Island, about which there is probably less known than of any other similar accessible area in the province or Britishpects, a most extraordinary thing when one comes to think about it. For many years Victoria was the chief settlement in the province. It was peopled by a mining community to a large extent, that is to say, the majority of the men residing here, at one period in the city's history, had in one way or another, followed mining for a livelihood. But their fields of labor were on the Mainland—notably the Cassiar and Cariboo districts. Save for the "rush" to the placers of Leech river in 1862, no discoveries were made on the Island which attracted great attention. In the early days placer mining was the only branch of the industry considered worthy of being exploited, lode mining not being seriously engaged in until, comparatively speaking, a few years ago. As Vancouver Island was not believed to possess rich placer "diggings," the miners' attention was naturally drawn to the Mainland. But with the advent of capital to engage in lode mining in this province on a comprehensive scale, one would have thought that more attention would have been paid to Vancouver Island that proved the case. We are putting the case accurately in saying that less is actually known of the mineral resources of this Island than any other district in the province, save, of course, the remote northern interior. It may prove profitable and interesting to speculate in lode mining, and in the progress thus far made in the industry in this province, capital has trod in the footsteps of the prospector, wherever the latter may have wandered; and to a very marked extent the trails have led to districts on the Mainland and not Vancouver Island. This is probably due to the fact that it is very difficult for a prospector to make his way about on this Island, which has so often been described by those who speak with knowledge as the roughest area in the province—in its topographical features. Precipitous mountains, deep ravines and tremendously thick underbrush are obstacles in the path of the prospector, which have thus far deterred him from examining as he would wish a district which is believed to be as rich in mineral resources of the first order as any other in the province. All expert examination which has thus far been made supports this belief. But it is little short of astounding to learn how little is known of the country in respect to bisecting the Island, from Nanaimo on the east coast to Alberni on the west coast, and all that portion north of the line is practically a terra incognita to the prospector and the miner. Of course in the immediate vicinity of the small settlements which fringe the east and west coasts in the northern portion of the Island, some prospecting has been done, but only in a most desultory fashion. Notwithstanding the fact that Vancouver Island has been but cursorily examined by the prospector, some very valuable properties have been discovered, with the result that the industry is already fairly established here. The plans of the Canadian Pacific Railway for the development of the Island, which are to be pushed vigorously to consummation, imply that it will be thrown open to the prospectors in a manner which ought to result in very important discoveries. Within a very brief period districts now absolutely inaccessible will have been pierced by survey parties, trails and roads will have been constructed, and a way will be thus opened for the man with the pick and the magnifying glass. We will await the result of his examination with the keenest interest and with full confidence that he will reveal to the capitalist rich fields for profitable attention which have been hitherto quite out of reach. With water transportation facilities on either side of the Island, it requires no stretch of the imagination to believe that, assuming that its mineral resources are as rich as they are popularly supposed to be, there will be built up flourishing mining camps with associated industries not surpassed in point of importance in any district in British Columbia.

APPEALING TO THE THRONE

The Times excuses its repetition of the Montreal Herald's insult to British Columbia through its premier by saying that Mr. McBride used the expression "to the foot of the throne" because it had a lofty sound and would appeal to the people in a dramatic way. Our contemporary is sadly lacking in its knowledge of Canadian political history and Canadian political speeches, or it would not make such a fuss over a form of words. Every Canadian ought to know that the expression to which the Times objects has been almost invariably employed in connection with applications to the imperial government. Every one, who has come to the years of discretion, ought to know that appeals to the imperial government must be made through the Department specially charged with matters of the class to which such appeals belong. Matters relating to the amendment of the British North America Act properly come under the jurisdiction of the Colonial Office.

But we are told that the province has no right to appeal to the Colonial Office because it cannot be claimed that the terms of union have not been kept. But the fact of the case is that it is proposed to change the terms of union. This can only be done by an Act of the British Parliament, and that being the case, it is proper for British Columbia to appeal to the Imperial government against a decision on the part of the Canadian government to alter that act in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the province. If the Dominion government had seen fit to treat the new terms as a matter of domestic concern, it is not easy to see how the province could have had any status in London. But Sir Wilfrid Laurier has set the example of going "to the foot of the Throne," and the right of British Columbia to follow him there cannot be successfully denied. It does not appear to have been denied. The necessary credentials were issued by the Governor-General, not by Sir Wilfrid Laurier as the Times alleges, and these credentials were issued as a matter of right not as a favor. The Colonial Office recognized Mr. McBride's status. Sir Wilfrid Laurier recognized it, by replying to the case presented by the British Columbia premier. The matter is "at the foot of the throne," and if the decision is adverse to British Columbia, it will not be because the province had no status to make the appeal, but because Sir Wilfrid Laurier has been sufficiently influential to prevent the appeal being granted.

AN IMPORTANT SUGGESTION.

The suggestion is made that a tract of land adjacent to the exhibition grounds at Oak Bay is eminently suitable as a site for the experimental farm which is to be established on Vancouver Island by the federal government, and that an effort should be made to secure the location of it at that point. This is very interesting and the proposal should not be dismissed without fullest consideration. A very strong case could undoubtedly be made out in favor of the government adopting the recommendation. Victoria is exceptionally well situated in respect to accessibility, alike to the farming communities of lower Vancouver Island and those along the Fraser delta; and as no doubt accessibility would be a point of much consideration in determining the location, we need fear nothing from the most critical examination of that aspect of the case. Then, again, climatic conditions ought to be a factor of much weight in choosing a site. Here, again, we occupy an unchallenged position. A very interesting question, indeed, has been opened up for debate; and while no doubt some plausible objections will be raised against the suggestion, the matter is so important that we trust no hasty decision will be reached by the government, but that full consideration will be given our claims. We shall await with very great interest further discussion on the point raised. The experimental farm at Ottawa is one of the great sights of the city, and a similar, though smaller, farm here would be a great attraction.

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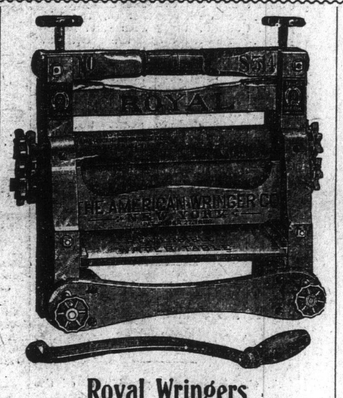

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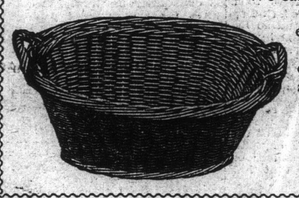

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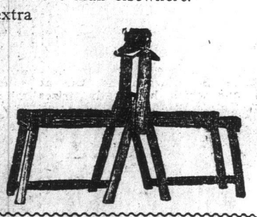

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