

The Colonist.

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A. G. SARGISON, Managing Director.

THE DAILY COLONIST

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THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY AND POLICY.

Mr. Monk, who is regarded as local leader of the Conservatives in the province of Quebec, is not satisfied with the party's platform. He thinks it is not definite enough, and not popular enough. He would go in for a socialistic propaganda such as they have had exemplified in Australia and New Zealand. He would also advocate Canada having full treaty-making powers. It is stated that at the same meeting at which Mr. Monk expressed these views other gentlemen spoke in favor of the independence of the province of Quebec. We can understand a leader in the province of Quebec desiring to popularize his party in the way suggested, but his programme is an impossibility for the rest of Canada. We all believe in a good political platform; but it must be sound. Canada has gone about as far in the directions indicated as is safe, and certainly there is little in the success of either Australia or New Zealand to encourage Canada to follow their example. The idea of Canadian independence has always been popular in Quebec, at least among certain sections of it, but the tendency generally in Canada is in favor of, rather than opposed to, closer union with the Mother Country, and when we ask for the treaty-making power we practically cut the last tie that binds us to Great Britain. Some very good and loyal Canadians have advocated the same thing that Mr. Monk does, but the power to make treaties means Canadian independence pure and simple, and that we do not want. Every interest is bound up with the Empire, and material as well as sentimental considerations are making the bond tighter year by year. There is perhaps one notable exception to that, but it does not represent the people of the province of Canada as a whole. We refer to the policy of military independence which has been put in effect at Ottawa. Co-operation with Great Britain would have been much more effective from a military point of view, and much cheaper from the standpoint of economy. However, the die has been cast, and we must accept the situation as it is. Fortunately the Imperial authorities have construed Canada's action as the outcome of a desire to relieve the Mother Country of some of the burden of defence rather than to weaken the tie between the two countries. There are those who think, however, that it will have the latter effect.

THE DUTY ON FRUIT.

At the session of the tariff commission at Nelson some important matters in connection with the fruit industry were discussed. First of all was the danger of the duty being lowered or taken off fruit. Some time ago we pointed out that a move in this direction, and that as the farmer was the preponderant political element of the country the danger of their being successful was a real one. Of course, the consumer of the middle west would regard it as anything but a calamity. He would, on the other hand, regard it as a blessing. It would, however, be a heavy blow to British Columbia's interests. Fruit growing in this province is an infant industry, which is just getting on its legs. Throughout the province, wherever it has been carried on to any extent, the prospects are bright, and with the Northwest as practically our only outside market—for some time at least—to take off the duty, as asked for by those who made representations before the tariff commission at Winnipeg, would be a serious matter. Indeed, Oregon and Washington are well developed fruit fields as compared with British Columbia and are in a position to swamp the market with their surplus fruit, in the same way that their lumbermen have been able at times to destroy our market for lumber. The facts which were presented by the Fruit Growers' Association of Kootenay and by Mr. Martin Burrill of Boundary should have a good effect in preventing the commissioners from coming to a conclusion favorable to the fruit dealers and fruit vendors of Winnipeg. It was pointed out that fruit growing constituted one of our most valuable assets, that it required a lot of capital and time to make it profitable, and that now, as the industry is just becoming valuable, it would be greatly discouraged by taking away the measure of protection under which it has been able to develop thus far. This statement appears in the memorial presented to the commissioners, which was ably supplemented by Mr. Burrill of Grand Forks.

In regard to the value of this industry in British Columbia, and its rate of development, we may say that at the end of 1904 there were some 300,000 bearing fruit trees in existence. Districts whose sole industry was mining a short time since have proved to be admirably adapted to fruit culture. The Nelson district may be kind to exaggerate. In one class of fruit alone, that of strawberries, in 1903 there were produced 2,000 crates. In 1904 this amount was doubled, and this year over 12,000 crates

of this fruit were marketed. A corresponding increase of other fruits has obtained to such an extent that while in 1904 the province realized the sum of \$25,000, at the present time the Kootenay lake district is exporting considerable quantities of fruit; large numbers of settlers are embarking in the business, and the industry will add materially to the prosperity of the city and the surrounding country.

"These things are equally true of other parts of the province. No less than 500,000 trees have been planted in the province during the past year, the land under fruit at the present time constituting an area of some 20,000 acres. Some \$500,000 has been expended during the past year in the purchase and development of orchard lands, and the product which in 1904 realized \$500,000 will be vastly increased this year."

Special stress was laid upon the fact taken by this province to keep the fruit clear of pests and diseases of all kinds. The fruit which came into the North-west in competition with our fruit was chiefly from Washington and Oregon and was badly infected. In Ontario it had cost large sums of money to eradicate fruit pests brought in by infected fruit and trees. It costs the United States millions of money annually. So far British Columbia had remained free of the fruit scourge, and it was of finite importance that it should remain so. Mr. Burrill properly held that the duty should not be imposed on fruits not grown in the country, such as oranges and lemons. In this he will be generally supported. The claims of the fruit growers to the maintenance of the present duties are certainly very strong. Having adopted protection as a theory of government for the whole of the country, to withdraw it in some particular instance in the interests of some particular section is not sound in principle of fact. Lumber and fruit, being the product of two great industries, are entitled to the same kind and degree of protection as all other industries are.

THE PANAMA CANAL.

The enthusiasm which marked the initiation of work on the Panama Canal has been somewhat dampened by the recently published report of the Canal Commission, which discloses a state of affairs on the isthmus as disastrous as it is deplorable. Not only has no progress been made in the actual work of construction, but the workmen who have survived the deadly effects of the climate are actually starving through the rapacity and dishonesty of those entrusted with the furnishing of supplies. The Frenchman Argonnet, with its accusations of fraud, describes the situation thus:

"For twenty years the American press have been jeering at the French canal company because it spent millions in constructing office buildings, hotels, boarding houses and hospitals, instead of 'making the dirt fly.' When the Canal Commission was appointed it was announced with a roar from ocean to ocean that we were going to 'make the dirt fly.' But the expiration of a year, the first commission, having failed to make the dirt fly, a second commission was appointed. A new commission was appointed, with renewed instruction to 'make the dirt fly.' But the second commission found that the dirt-flying would be principally to cover up the millions of dollars which they did not want to 'make the dirt fly.' So they concentrated the entire force and funds of the canal on the office buildings, hotels, boarding houses, and of hospitals. In short, they are doing exactly what the French jeering was about. 'Or all the said scandals they heard enough—no heard of none worse than that great dissipation—the spending of their own and the canal money by the high officials on gambling, on the one hand, and on the other, on the commission seems to have admitted frankly that our transportation and commissary duties are so far from being economical that they are actually starving the laborers. They are not food for them to buy. Bad as the French officials were, they at least did not starve their laborers. They stole, but did not starve."

A WORD IN SEASON.

The tariff commissioners were entertained at Nelson at the close of their tour by a trip on the C. P. R. steamer, the Kootenay, and a supper at Procter. At the supper there were several speeches made by Hon. W. S. Fielding, L. P. Brodeur, Senator Tennant, and Mr. Martin Burrill—in which interesting sentiments were expressed in an entirely non-partisan mood. Both the Minister of Finance and the Hon. Mr. Brodeur admitted having become infected with the western fever, and of being greatly impressed with the reality of things they had often read about and heard of, but had not before seen—the old story—illustrating the desirability of men in office in the east basing their conclusions as to the actual requirements of the country upon personal observation. Mr. Fielding jokingly referred to the saving of the treasury of Canada by him not having come to British Columbia since he had been made Minister of Finance, but there is probably more than fun in the statement, and one speaker on occasion in question did not fail to make use of the opportunity afforded him. Mr. Martin Burrill, who won high encomiums from Mr. Fielding in respect to his work as a fruit grower, in concluding what the Daily News described as an eloquent speech said that he was glad that the ministers were getting in touch with the geographical features of the country and could understand how sparsely scattered communities that, in between the heavy mountain ranges, required much in the way of aided transportation, found it difficult to establish communications and to keep Canadian institutions. The favored son of Nova Scotia, the Hon. W. S. Fielding, had swept that province upon better terms, and when the coming conference of premiers discussed the readjustment of provincial subsidies he would be better able to understand British Columbia's special claims to consideration. Mr. Burrill's remarks were appropriate, and as Mr. Fielding, as Minister of Finance, is more deeply interested than any other minister of state in the financial readjustment asked for by the provinces, he will go away impressed with the importance of his trip, especially from the point of view of British Columbia in that question.

A funny newspaper paragrapher remarks that Russia is at this time to keep her promise to retire from Manchuria. Another states that Mr. Witte's assertion that Russia will resist a power in the East to strictly true, only she will not remain the power she thinks she has been. Japan taught the rest of the nations not to be too much afraid of her.

"Hotel Empress" has been finally decided upon for the new C. F. R. hotel, which leads us to enquire once more, "What's in a name?" In connection with the fact that call for the Empress there certainly is an appropriateness to it. Nobody apparently thought of the Orient, which would have expressed the same idea. However, the name has been given and it is done with; people can now speculate upon some other problem—the hotel, for instance, or the winter gardens, for instance.

The Portland Oregonian speaks about "Portland, B. C." as a place where a new mill with a capacity of 1,000 barrels a day is being erected. There is an evident necessity for Great Britain studying geography. The Oregonian brought out, however, is significant, as the proposed mill is going to bid for the Oriental flour trade, of which the American mill have heretofore enjoyed a monopoly. The Oregonian thinks that if the boycott on American goods in China continues, Canada will be in a position to greatly benefit by it.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for views expressed by correspondents.]

OIL AT TIAN HARBOR.

Sir—The oil excitement which has lately been prevalent in the Kootenay district has struck me as queer. I have just returned from a trip to the coast, and I have had the effect of causing people to look up the far deposits at Tian Harbor, and has led to a great deal of speculation. This has brought out the fact that we have more and better oil possibilities than we are aware of. Although so far everything is in a mere state of speculation, yet the signs and possibilities for oil fields in this district are highly promising. This year's license has already been applied for to prospect 30,000 acres. The place where the tar deposits are located is about 10 miles from Tian Point and Sisk. The strata are sandstone and shale, and the oil is seen seeping up above ground at different places. I have seen several of these places, and I am sure that there is a large quantity of oil in the district.

For twenty years the American press have been jeering at the French canal company because it spent millions in constructing office buildings, hotels, boarding houses and hospitals, instead of 'making the dirt fly.' When the Canal Commission was appointed it was announced with a roar from ocean to ocean that we were going to 'make the dirt fly.' But the expiration of a year, the first commission, having failed to make the dirt fly, a second commission was appointed. A new commission was appointed, with renewed instruction to 'make the dirt fly.' But the second commission found that the dirt-flying would be principally to cover up the millions of dollars which they did not want to 'make the dirt fly.' So they concentrated the entire force and funds of the canal on the office buildings, hotels, boarding houses, and of hospitals. In short, they are doing exactly what the French jeering was about. 'Or all the said scandals they heard enough—no heard of none worse than that great dissipation—the spending of their own and the canal money by the high officials on gambling, on the one hand, and on the other, on the commission seems to have admitted frankly that our transportation and commissary duties are so far from being economical that they are actually starving the laborers. They are not food for them to buy. Bad as the French officials were, they at least did not starve their laborers. They stole, but did not starve."

A curious feature is that the true oil is found in the sandstone and shale, and the latter are, as I have previously stated, of a strictly Kanabian origin. This is a fact which is of great importance, as it shows that the oil is of a high grade, and is not the low grade oil which is found in the oil fields of the United States. The oil is found in the sandstone and shale, and the latter are, as I have previously stated, of a strictly Kanabian origin. This is a fact which is of great importance, as it shows that the oil is of a high grade, and is not the low grade oil which is found in the oil fields of the United States. The oil is found in the sandstone and shale, and the latter are, as I have previously stated, of a strictly Kanabian origin. This is a fact which is of great importance, as it shows that the oil is of a high grade, and is not the low grade oil which is found in the oil fields of the United States. 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