The Colonist.

MONDAY, JUNE 20, 1898.

SOME QUESTIONS.

The Victoria Times made its first serious contribution to the literature of the present campaign on Thursday evening in the shape of a series of questions, which it thinks every voter in British Columbia should ask himself. Some of the questions are rather absurd, but others require some notice, because the Colonist does not propose to permit any seemingly reasonable question touching the issue of the present campaign to remain unanswered. In order that it may not be said that the Colonist has evaded any of the queries propounded by the Times, each of them will be taken up in turn.

1. "Is this province governed as it ought to be?" This is a very indefinite question; but we have a right to assume, in view of the other questions asked, that the word "governed" means what it is ordinarily used to signify, viz., the manner in which the laws are administered. Upon this point there can hardly be two questions. British Columbia is an exceedingly well governed province. It is most efficiently policed. Crime is speedily punished. Life and property are as safe as they are anywhere in the world, although the sparseness of the population and the enormous area over which it is scattered render this branch of the duties of the government especially onerous. The several departments of the public service are administered with good judgment and in a manner that has given entire satisfaction. Under this head we place the education department, the mining department, the public works department, the administration of Crown lands, and the collection and disbursement of revenue. There may be other matters which might properly be considered as embraced within the term "government," when applied to the province, but we do not recall them at present. The voters of British Columbia, in view of the very excellent manner in which all these several branches in the public service are carried on, and of the total absence of any complaints, excepting those of so trivial a character that no member of the opposition in the legislature, and no opposition newspaper has thought fit to refer to them, will agree with us that the answer to the first question of the Times is that the province is well governed.

2. "Is there good and sufficient reason for the fact that the per capita debt of British Columbia is very much greater than that of any other province in the Dominion?" Yes. The reason is that the population of the province as compared with its area, its great wealth, and the volume of business transacted here, is very far less than that of any of the eastern provinces. We have in British Columbia an area of nearly 400,000 square miles, and the population until within a very few years has been less than one to every four square miles. This population has been scattered over an area greater than that of any of the eastern provinces, and it was absolutely necessary to make large outlays in order to meet the requirements of the several communities. It would have been utterly impossible to have met the expenditures necessary to promote the progress of British Columbia out of the current income. Moreover, the conditions under which the province is being developed are very different from those which prevailed in the East when the older provinces were being opened up. Men were content in the days before railways and telegraphs to go ahead slowly. Settlers were willing to put up for a lifetime with inconveniences which would not be now tolerated for a day. If the residents in our agricultural sections were forced to suffer the privations and hardships cheerfully borne by the pioneer settlers in Eastern Canada, they would not stay in the country any longer than they could by any possibility avoid. Even in the older provinces it is now recognized that provision must be made for the comfort and accommodation of settlers, and the greater part of the debt of the eastern provinces has been incurred in providing for new districts some of the conveniences of civilization. In the older provinces for a hundred years the people had gone along improving the country by the old methods, whereas in British Columbia a domain of imperial dimensions is being taken out of the rough condition, in which nature left it, and made fit for the prosecution of the most advanced industries and for occupation by settlers under conditions that will, at least, favorably compare with those to be found in the older provinces and in the United States. These are the reasons why the per capita debt of this province is greater than that of any of the older provinces.

3. "Under a progressive government should not this province be able to make a very much better showing than it has done?" and (4) "Is this province getting a fair show at the hands of the Turner government?" It is not very clear what the Times means by these questions. The province is certainly making a very excellent showing. Its population is increasing with unexampled rapidity. Its credit stands as high as that of any other of the colonial governments. Its mining development is the admiration of the world. Capital is flowing freely for investment in industries of different descriptions. Important railway projects have been carried to a successful conclusion and others have been inaugurated. The general condition of business is excellent, and the credit of our business men fully equal to that of those in any other part of the world. New roads are being opened up in all parts of the country. School houses are being built wherever the people call for them. Court houses and other necessary institutions for the administration of justice are being multiplied. The necessities of the farmers are receiving the most careful and liberal treatment. In short, the whole country is prosperous, and the consensus of opinion in the eastern provinces, the United States and Great Britain, is that British Columbia presents as many attractions to the investor, the miner and the settler as any other part of the British Empire. If these things are not true, the Times should point out which of them is untrue. If they are true, then certainly the province has made an excellent showing under the Turner administration, whose policy has unquestionably been progressive. This latter fact is not disputed even by those who question the wisdom of its policy. As for the fourth question, it scarcely seems to merit any other reply than can be inferred from what has been just stated.

4. "Can I conscientiously afford to ignore the very serious charges that are made against the government?" and (6) "Is it my duty as a citizen and a voter to demand a searching investigation into those charges and to insist that satisfactory explanation shall be given on all points?" If there are any charges—serious or otherwise—against the government, no voter ought to ignore them, but every voter should insist that they shall be thoroughly investigated. The Colonist is friendly to the administration of the Hon. Mr. Turner, but it states in the most emphatic way possible that if charges of mis-government were specified against it, it would insist as strongly as anyone that they should be met and answered before it would say one further word to induce the electors to give their votes to the supporters of the government. Such charges have not been made. On the contrary, though challenged in the most distinct and emphatic way on more than one occasion, both during the recess and while the house was in session, to make one specific charge against the administration of Hon. Mr. Turner, not an opposition newspaper and not an opposition member of the legislature, has ventured to come forward with a single specific allegation, upon which issue could be joined and proof could be adduced. Under these circumstances, it is the tactics of a coward to seek to create an impression that grave charges against the administration remain unanswered. The Times speak of an investigation. Yet for three months and more the opposition sat in their places in the legislature and failed to make a charge, failed to demand an investigation into anything, failed even to make an assertion, which by the most forced construction of language could be construed into an insinuation that the government had committed any thing wrong in regard to which testimony of any nature or kind whatever could be induced. The Colonist feels, therefore, that it is justified in saying to the voters that questions 4 and 5 propounded by the Times may be dismissed wholly from this campaign, and it gives notice that it will hereafter decline to discuss propositions of this character, and, in dealing with them when they are advanced, will confine what it has to say to the record of those who advance them.

5. "Is the peculiar policy of the Turner government the best suited to the requirements of British Columbia?" We assume that the word "peculiar" in this question is used advisedly by the Times, and is intended to imply that the opposition has no part in the policy to which the government stands committed. That policy is the development of the country by railways and highways, the encouragement of settlement, the promotion of agriculture, the advancement of education, and in order that these several lines may be successfully prosecuted, to procure the money necessary for permanent improvements by negotiation of loans on reasonable terms. If we may judge from their platform and newspaper utterances, the opposition would have the people believe that all the public works necessary for the development of British Columbia could be carried on by expenditures out of the revenue. Mr. Turner and his colleagues do not think so. We do not suppose that the opposition would care to be considered as opposed to the improvement of the province on the lines above indicated, and we therefore assume that in the questions last above quoted the Times refers particularly to the policy of making permanent improvements by borrowing money, and we most unhesitatingly say that such a line of policy is not only the best suited to the requirements of British Columbia but is the only one which the people would tolerate for a moment. Even the opposition in the legislature has endorsed it.

6. "Is it likely that the return to power of ministers with spotted records will help us to regain the confidence of British capital? " We have yet to learn that British Columbia has lost the confidence of British capital. Indeed, the enormous sums that are being expended in the province by private capitalists, and the facility with which money can be borrowed on provincial securities, prove that the province possesses the fullest confidence of British capital. The insinuation against the records of the ministers is simply contemptible and unworthy of any answer.

7. "Would it not be better for the province to have a government less antagonistic to the federal government than the Turner government has shown itself to be?" The present federal government has been in power not quite two years, and we defy the Times or anyone else to show a single instance where the Hon. Mr. Turner's government has shown itself hostile to the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. We defy the Times to produce an atom of proof that the Dominion government regards the administration of the Hon. Mr. Turner and his colleagues as hostile in any sense. In the absence of any facts in the past on which to base a question like that just quoted, the only conclusion which seems possible is that the Times regards the demand for fair play for British Columbia as a movement antagonistic to the present Dominion government. It is not antagonistic. It will not be regarded as antagonistic at Ottawa; but if it were, it would be none the less the duty of the voters of British Columbia to strengthen Mr. Turner's hands in making that demand. This province is not seeking favors from the government at Ottawa as a compensation for political favors extended. It is simply asking justice and this demand must be made no matter whether the Liberals or the Conservatives are in power.

8. "Can I be mistaken in the evidence of my own eyes that the statements made by the government and their supporters, and the facts as set down in black and white do not balance?"

9. "Is it the case that the ministers declare there is no debt while my pockets knows the contrary, and shall I be doing my duty as a citizen by helping to return to power the people who say such things?" Until some light is cast upon what these questions mean, the Colonist does not think it worth while to do more than quote them as illustrative of the confused mental condition in which our contemporary fancies the people are at the present time.

10. "Can I or any man in this crisis afford to throw away a vote?"

11. "Who is to get my vote?" It is certainly not desirable that a man should throw away his vote. It is likewise evident that a vote cast in the city of Victoria for any others than the gentlemen on the government ticket will be thrown away, for there is no manner of doubt as to the election of Messrs. Turner, Helmcken, Hall and McPhillips. Therefore, we answer question No. 10 by saying "No," and question No. 11 by saying "Vote for the four government candidates."

A POLICY FORESHADOWED.

In the supplementary estimates passed by parliament, occurs the following item:

To defray the expense of an exploratory survey to ascertain the most practical route for an all-Canadian route from some point on the existing railway into the Klondike district—$40,000.

Called upon for an explanation, the Minister of Railways said that the sum was an estimate of the probable cost of an exploratory survey from Edmonton through the passes and towards the Pacific Coast. The Hon. Mr. Foster asked if it was intended to go to the Coast, and in reply the minister made the following significant statement:

Pretty close to it, if we can. A second item, it will be observed, provides for an exploratory survey from the Stikine river to some point on the Coast. It is our expectation that the surveying parties will likely strike a common point somewhere between the Stikine river and the seaboard upon the Pacific coast of British Columbia. If one can form anything like an accurate judgment at all from the map and what information is available as respects that country, it is not unlikely that somewhere to the south of the Stikine river the parties surveying from the east and seeking a line from Edmonton as a starting point would intercept a line which would be found practicable from the Stikine river to an ocean port.

Hon. Mr. Haggart then asked if this explanation was intended to carry out a statement made by the Minister of the Interior to the effect that the proposed line from the Stikine was to form part of a road that would give the people of Edmonton not only a line to the Yukon, but one to the Coast. To this the Minister of Railways replied:

Yes, it was indicated, I think at a very early period in the session that the all-Canadian route, when extended south from the Stikine, would form part of the line of railway from Edmonton running through the Rockies to the west.

We do not think it is possible to overestimate the significance of the above statements of the Minister of Railways, and it is a matter of surprise that they have not attracted more attention. To us they appear to foreshadow a new transcontinental railway, and if this is the case, of all the utterances made in parliament during the last session they are the most pregnant with meaning for the future of British Columbia, and for Canada as a whole.

The News-Advertiser professes to see, in the fact that all four of the nominees of the citizen's convention in Vancouver are Conservatives, proof that the Hon. Mr. Turner seeks to run the Vancouver election on party lines. The Colonist is sure that Mr. Turner had no more to do with the nomination of the gentlemen in question than the man in the moon. Mr. Turner has not attempted to exercise any influence over the choice of his friends even in Victoria, where he might be supposed to feel at liberty to do so. As a matter of fact when the Colonist's representative asked Mr. Turner the morning after the nominations were made what the federal politics of the candidates were, the honorable gentleman replied that he could not speak about them all, for he did not know. The fact that the four gentlemen nominated have the support of the friends of the government, irrespective of Dominion politics, shows that the latter have no place in the contest. Does not the News-Advertiser realize that the moment an effort is made to apportion out the nominations between the representatives of the two federal parties, federal politics will be at once introduced?

The latest advices from the south riding of East Kootenay are of the most gratifying kind. The candidates there are the Hon. Col. Baker and Mr. William Baillie. The nomination of the latter is said not to be regarded with approval by all oppositionists in the riding, as he is a comparative stranger there, and without any interest to identify himself with the district. Since Mr. Baillie managed to corral the votes of the opposition convention no one has had any fear as to Col. Baker's election. Col. Baker has large interests in south-eastern Kootenay. He was one of the first persons to appreciate its great natural wealth and possible development. He has given the best proof that any man can of his faith in that portion of the province by expending his money freely there. It is not too much to say that he has been more closely identified with the development and progress of East Kootenay than any other individual. As a representative, he has always had the interests of his constituency at heart, and the estimates submitted to the legislature during the time in which he has occupied a seat in that body, bear eloquent testimony to his watchfulness over the interests of those who elected him. As a cabinet minister, he has been very successful, having administered two of the most important departments of public affairs in a manner which has not only been without complaint, but has given perfect satisfaction in all parts of the province. The people of East Kootenay would make a great mistake if they did not re-elect Col. Baker, but we are glad to say there is not the slightest probability of their defeating him.

The Rossland Record asks the Colonist how many cities in the State of Washington Canadians have built. This is a question which merits a word of reply. The census of 1890 showed that there were in Western Washington 60,000 persons who had been born in Canada, and if these people did not contribute more than a little towards the building up of the cities there, we are much mistaken. But to apply the matter to the question of getting employment from the cities, which was what led to the little discussion between the Colonist and the Record, not one man of all this great host could get a day's work from a municipal corporation unless he had become an American citizen.

The Kaslo Morning News says that Kootenay "does not want a representative who will saw away on the delicate nerves of capital with a reform bow." This is not particularly elegant, but it means all right. The opposition practice of hampering investment in every way may not be inaptly described as a sawing process. And, certainly, Kootenay, of all parts of British Columbia, cannot afford to have it continued, much less to have it made a part of the policy of the government of the province.

The News-Advertiser says that Mr. McDonald, who was nominated by the Citizens' convention, was a short time ago an applicant for a place as delegate to the opposition convention. We do not know just how correct this is; about as much so, probably, as the News-Advertiser's report of Dr. Carroll's retirement. But if it is literally true, Mr. McDonald was probably not the first, as he will certainly not be the last man to abandon the opposition ranks sooner than swallow the Heavenly Twins, Martin and Cotton.

Mr. W. W. B. McInnes, M.P., who at one time contemplated retiring from the federal parliament and offering as a candidate for the local house, has reconsidered the matter and will retain his present seat. If what Mr. McInnes desires is a wide field of usefulness, he has it now; for never did a province offer a better opportunity to its young men than British Columbia now does, especially to those who have the ear of parliament.

The Times says: "There seems to be a method in the madness of some railway promoters, but is it an honest method?" We give it up; but suggest that the Times should ask Mr. Corbin and Senator Templeman for some light on the subject.

The Times is quite correct. It is very near the time that work was begun on the V. V. & E. railway and on some others as well, and if it will have a little patience it will hear the good news soon.

The Rossland Miner says that the government's chances in that riding are improving every day, the fear of the people being that a new government would abandon the policy of progress with which Mr. Turner has been identified.

Mr. Bostock continues to allow his paper, the Province, to refer to the Hon. J. H. Turner in language which is utterly indefensible. The expressions used have not the redeeming merit of severity. They are simply insulting.

The very best of news comes from the west riding of Yale. Mr. Graham has reconsidered his intention of retiring to private life; but the indications are that his late constituents have concluded that in this case second thoughts were not best, and will leave him at full liberty to carry out his original intention. In Mr. Price Ellison the friends of the government have a capital candidate. He has large interests in the community, with which he has been identified for a long time. He is much liked and possesses an aptitude for affairs, which Mr. Graham, with all his excellent qualities, very greatly lacked.

The Times alleges that Mr. Gordon Hunter at one time sought a rural constituency. We have Mr. Hunter's authority that this allegation is wholly without foundation. Mr. Hunter did not contemplate taking any part whatever in politics until a few days before the convention at which his name was proposed as a government candidate.

"'Deed no, sah, I don' have to go to no wah."

"But you are liable."

"Not much I ain't, sah. I done fixed that. No, sah, it's just unpossible for me to do any fightin'. I get my old woman to go ovah to de police co't an' put me unner bonds fer to keep de peace. Bet your life dey don't git no fightin' out o' dis coon."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Mr. Robertson's friends report that his canvass in Cowichan is meeting with great success and that they are confident of his election.

As yet no word has been received of any opposition candidate in Alberni, where Mr. Huff will once more uphold the government standard.

The Hon. Attorney-General left Victoria last night for a short visit to the Mainland. He will address public meetings at Chilliwack, Vernon, and probably some other points while away.

Speaking from the information at present available, we feel warranted in saying that the outlook is that the government candidates will carry every constituency in the Kootenays.

The oppositionists in Chilliwack have declined to renominate Mr. Vedder, or Mr. Vedder has declined to be renominated, we do not know which, and Mr. Charles Monroe will be put up to prevent Hon. Mr. Turner from carrying the riding by acclamation. It is to be hoped that Mr. Monroe will see that those who are responsible for his nomination will put up the deposit, which he is certain to lose.

The friends of the government have every reason to feel gratified at the outlook in the three Nanaimo ridings. The opponent of Mr. Bryden has not yet been announced, but the election of that gentleman is a foregone conclusion. This is at it ought to be, for Mr. Bryden is a man, whom any constituency might well desire to have as its representative. His personal popularity is great and deservedly so, for it would be hard to find anywhere his superior in those qualities that endear a man to his friends. In Nanaimo city, Mr. Archibald McGregor is developing very great strength, and competent judges say that he will readily defeat his opponent. Mr. McGregor is not only a gentleman of great personal worth, but he knows everyone and everyone knows him. He is full of energy and will make a capital successor to his brother, who, during the past four years so ably cared for the wants of the constituency. Dr. Walkem is being stoutly opposed in South Nanaimo, but he is going to win. The Doctor has too many friends and is too good a fighter to be overcome, even by the powerful influences brought to bear against him. His former constituents would make a great mistake to set him aside for an untried man, who will not only have no experience, but will be out of touch with the government. A very well-informed authority tells the Colonist that the Doctor's prospects of success are very bright and that he is steadily gaining. The people of the Nanaimo riding see that their interests lie in the continuation of the progressive policy, which has been carried out by the Hon. Mr. Turner, and in strengthening the demand for fair play for British Columbia.

CANADA'S WHEAT FIELD.

Bradstreet's report is to the effect that the wheat crop of Canada this year will reach 100,000,000 bushels. The consumption of wheat in this country averages about between five and six bushels per head of the population. For safety, let us put the amount at six bushels, which will give an annual consumption, let us say, of approximately 35,000,000 bushels. This would leave 65,000,000 bushels for export. The average importation of wheat into Great Britain is about 100,000,000 bushels a year. Therefore Canada will be able to supply at least three-fifths of the whole amount which the mother country will need, and as yet the wheat-growing area of the Dominion has only been utilized to a very small extent comparatively speaking. These two considerations are of great importance in view of the fact that the Mother Country must depend upon an outside source for her wheat supply. Great fears have been expressed during the last few months that, in the event of war, some of the great grain growing countries, such as Russia and the United States, might place an embargo on wheat. Such things have been done before and it is reasonable to suppose they will be done again. It becomes, therefore, of prime importance to the British Empire that the United Kingdom should not be compelled to look outside of the protection of the flag for a supply of breadstuffs. At the present rate of progress it will not be very long before she will be independent of alien lands in this respect. A notable factor in this connection is that the Atlantic ocean is at its narrowest point between Canada and the Mother Country, so that the perils attending the ocean transportation of wheat in the event of war would be reduced to a minimum.

It seems, therefore, to be the duty of Canada, and a proper contribution toward the imperial defense, to open the great wheat fields of the Northwest Territory at the earliest possible day. Reference was made in these columns a few days ago to the breadth of Canada, and it was there pointed out that the area in the prairie region adapted for permanent occupation was at least 750 miles wide from North to South. Whether wheat can be grown successfully at the northern verge of this domain is a matter which experiment only can demonstrate, but the remarkable evidence gathered by Senator Schultz's committee some years ago is prima facie proof that such experiments would be successful. But even if we draw the northern limit of the wheat growing area at a point further south than the 60th parallel, there will remain an enormous region far more than capable of supplying the wants of the Mother Country beside providing food for Canada itself.

A consideration which must not be lost sight of is that the United States has doubtless reached its maximum of wheat production. There will be fluctuations from year to year, but the general proposition may be accepted that throughout a series of years the yield of wheat in that country will not increase over what it has been during the last decade. There is substantially no more wheat land to be broken up; for although the arid region contains a vast extent of land which can be made highly productive when irrigated, it would be useless to expect farmers on irrigated holdings to compete with the wheat growers in the great natural farming region of Canada. The population in the United States is increasing rapidly, and, consequently, the demand for breadstuffs is growing. This must soon exhaust the exportable margin, so that, regarded from the standpoint of statesmanship which seeks to provide for the exigencies of the future, the United States is within measurable distance of dropping out of the wheat exporting nations. It is very true that great quantities of corn are grown and the maximum yield of this grain has not yet been reached, but the people of the United States do not themselves take very kindly to corn as a general article of diet; and while it has been popularized to a certain degree in Great Britain, it is not likely to supplant wheat to any considerable extent. Indian corn is not the food on which nation-builders are nourished. It comes to its perfection in too southerly a latitude. The races that shape the destinies of the world are nourished on the foods which are at their best in latitudes where rigorous winters and long days of summer sunshine develop a hardy vegetation.

The indications that Canada may soon see inaugurated a policy which will lead to the construction across Canada of a new railway, a long distance north of the C.P.R., possesses very great interest in this connection. As the Colonist reads the signs of the times, the 20th century will open with such a policy fairly presented to the people. Indeed, if the greatness of the Dominion is to be realized in the lifetime of the present generation, and if we are to contribute our proper share to the development of the empire as a self-contained political and commercial entity, the construction of such a railway cannot be very much longer delayed.

THE LESSON OF A FUNERAL.

Le Temps, commenting upon the impressive services with which the body of Gladstone was committed to its resting place in Westminster Abbey, said, "Happy England! that can give its great sons a truly national funeral." The burial of Gladstone was more than a mere pageant in honor of a deceased statesman. It was a national recognition of that faith in God and that appreciation of human responsibility of which the life of the great commoner was so conspicuous an example. In the pride of success and prosperity, and in the contemplation of its great strength and boundless resources, the British Empire might not unnaturally feel the intoxication of power. It was fear of this which caused Kipling, when the Jubilee celebration was over, to give to his countrymen that noble recessional hymn. We need to be reminded as a people of our moral responsibilities, to be brought face to face at times with the obligations we are under to the Divine Ruler; and as through the happy inspiration of Kipling we took leave of the memorable festivities of last June with our thoughts centered upon Him to whom we as an Empire owe all that is best and most worth preserving, so, as a people, we rise from our knees from beside the tomb of Gladstone, feeling anew our sense of dependence upon the Power that "rules our destinies and shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may," and stronger and more fitted to discharge the mighty duties cast upon us as a nation.

The lesson of Gladstone's burial is in sympathy with the lesson of his great life. As he was one who, in the midst of the pressing, onerous, and almost countless obligations which his exalted position cast upon him, never forgot his duty towards the Divine nor failed to recognize it in the most public manner, so, as a people, we have, in consigning him to his grave among the illustrious galaxy of England's famous sons, not forgotten our duty as a people to look for guidance to Him who has been ever foremost in the minds of Britain's great men. It is noteworthy how large a part the religious instinct has played in determining the career of the leaders of our race; and here, in passing, it may be mentioned as worthy of note that the Presidents of the United States have been almost without exception men of a deeply religious mind. The responsibilities of exalted official position and the care of a nation's destinies seem to have upon the mind of the Anglo-Saxon the effect of causing him to turn to God for guidance. It is a remarkable fact, and one well worthy of pondering over by those who in the flippancy of their insignificance affect to despise the doctrine which teaches of Divine providence and human accountability. A distinguished preacher in one of the eastern cities, not long ago, spoke of the Anglo-Saxon race as the elect of God. While we may not adopt his exact phraseology, we may at least accept the lesson which the language conveys, namely, that we have a high destiny to fill, and that we should go forward upon the path which opens before us with faith and confidence, taking care, however, lest we forget that the nation is no greater, no better and no stronger than the individuals out of which it is composed. As a people, we gave to Gladstone a national funeral. As a people we should learn the lesson of his life, which is that the best that man can do comes from a union of patriotism and Christianity.

The appointment of Mr. Thos. A. Sharpe and Mr. G. H. Hadwen as an agricultural commission with Mr. Gosnell as secretary, is a guarantee that the various questions relating to agriculture in British Columbia calling for immediate attention will be intelligently taken up and valuable recommendations will be made.