



The official opening of the New Westminster Southern Railway was the most important event of last week. The occasion was of more than local interest on account of the international character assumed by the proceedings, and from the fact that the new road connects the cities of British Columbia with the American system of railways on this coast. A special train left Vancouver on the morning of the 14th February, having on board a large number of guests invited by the N. W. S. Company to participate in the opening ceremonies. Amongst those who accepted were Lieut.-Governor and Mrs. Nelson, Hon. John Robson, Premier, the majority of the members of the Legislature, now in session in Victoria, the United States and Japanese Consuls, the Mayors of Vancouver and New Westminster, members of the City Councils and Boards of Trade, and a large number of leading citizens from many places in the Province. Mrs. Nelson was accompanied by Mrs. Oppenheimer, wife of Mayor Oppenheimer, of Vancouver, and Mrs. Hendry, wife of Mr. John Hendry, vice-president of the Westminster Southern Railway. At Westminster a large addition was made to the party, who were joined by many prominent officials of that city: Judge Bole, Sheriff Armstrong, the managers of the Banks of Montreal and British Columbia, Mr. Moresley, the resident railway directors, and others, accompanied by the Artillery Band. The first stoppage was made at the site of the proposed Liverpool station. Here an address was presented to Mrs. Nelson, requesting her to bestow a name on the new town. A deed of a lot adjoining the station was also presented to her by the company in commemoration of the occasion. Although taken by surprise, Mrs. Nelson made a graceful reply, naming the place Liverpool, and expressing her thanks for the gift and for the kind words of the address. The train then proceeded on its way to the boundary line between British Columbia and the State of Washington. At this point, where the town of Blaine is situated, a large crowd had assembled, and extensive preparations had been made in the way of decorations. At the spot where the ceremony of "driving the last spike" was to take place a large arch had been erected across the track, wreathed with the flags of England and the United States, together with the ensigns of British Columbia and Washington. When the tie was placed in position and the two polished steel spikes arranged, one on the Canadian and one on the American side of the line, Lieut.-Governor Nelson drove home "our spike" amid the cheers of the spectators. In the absence of Governor Ferry, of Washington, Acting Governor Laughton drove the American spike into its place. As he raised the hammer he said, "May no other kind of a blow be ever struck between British Columbia and Washington than the one I am about to give," a sentiment which was greeted with enthusiastic applause. Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Laughton were then presented with small silver hammers, each gave an approving tap and the ceremony was complete. The train bringing excursionists northward from Fairhaven then approached the special bound south from Westminster, and the two locomotives touched or "kissed" each other on the boundary line amid the blowing of whistles and ringing of bells, the music of the bands and the cheers of the assembled multitude. A formal reception took place afterwards in the Opera House, and addresses were delivered by the Mayor of Blaine, Lieut.-Governor Nelson, Governor Laughton, Mr. H. G. Thompson and others. Mr. Jay Ewing, United States Consul at Vancouver, referred to the fact that there were on the platform Consular representatives of three nations—Spain, Sweden and Japan. The Canadian visitors were welcomed with many expressions of courtesy and good will. Many of the speakers dwelt on the possibility of a closer commercial union between the two countries in the near future. On this subject, indeed, many of the speeches may be said to have expanded into orations. The American eagle flapped his wings and soared into space as usual, and, strange to say, his flight seemed always in a northerly direction, until some unimaginative Canadians brought him down once more to earth—on his own side of the 49th parallel. A rather amusing incident was the reading of a congratulatory dispatch signed by the Hon. James G.

Blaine. It was couched in rather ambiguous terms and formed a text for a great deal of this speculative oratory. It has since been discovered that whoever sent the telegram Mr. Blaine had nothing to do with it. The Hon. John Robson, Premier of British Columbia, made an eloquent and patriotic speech. While agreeing to a certain extent with those who wished for freer trade relations with the United States, he yet considered that unrestricted reciprocity would be a mistake. He was proud of being a British subject, and thought it best that the two great nations should grow and continue to prosper side by side, united by the ties of friendship and good will. His address, though perfectly amicable and courteous, showed unmistakably that all these theories of closer union must not interfere with the loyalty felt by every true Canadian to his country and its institutions. After being entertained at a banquet in Fairhaven the visitors returned home, thoroughly pleased with their reception on American soil, and with the arrangements made for their pleasure and comfort by the president and directors of the Westminster Southern Railway, and so ended a memorable day in the history of railway matters in British Columbia.

LENNON.

Reflections Upon the Recent Elections.

That master of fiction and kindly satire, Charles Dickens, has given us an account of the contest between the Honourable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, and Horatio Fizkin, Esq., of Fizkin Lodge, rival candidates for the burrough of Eatanswell; and in his laughable way has held up for public condemnation the methods of the Blue and Buff parties alike. In Canada we also have had our Blue and Buff contest, and the tricks, prevarications and language of the rival parties might give rise to ridicule were they not humiliating to any high-minded Canadian with his country's interest at heart.

To a conscientious mind, prepared to form and act upon an unbiased judgment, and many of the electors were of this class, nothing can be more dishonourable than the mutilation or suppression of portions of a statistical argument or an article to such an extent that the emasculated statement was made to pipe in a key different from what it originally had. Yet this was a common resource of some party organs. The proverb, "All is fair in love and war," which has been bandied about considerably of late, is, perhaps, the most diabolical doctrine ever invented by a depraved mind to spawn hatred, malice and falsehood in this world, and the individual who resorts to such a proverb for excuse or justification of his conduct is self condemned and wholly untrustworthy.

It is also to be regretted that the publication of serious charges against candidates or their supporters without any attempt at verification, and even in despite of categorical denials, was so flagrantly resorted to. To my personal knowledge, it was in many cases wholly impossible for an accused person to obtain from the paper which had slandered him even the scant courtesy of granting space in its columns for his explanation or denial, and he was forced to seek the columns of his own party press for succour, which availed him nothing, since the vast majority of those who had read the charge never read its refutation. Surely a party confident of its integrity could spare such tactics!

The evils attending the existence of a party press cannot, probably, be eradicated, but the growth of the few conscientious unpartizan organs possessed by this country may ultimately lead to better things. Rather than the one-sided, almost unreliable editorials recently so common, it were better that the editorial columns become, like the pages of a magazine, open to all shades of opinion. Under such a system, strictly enforced and ignoring the host of somebodies or nobodies whose letters might beat like an ocean against the outer doors of the Sanctum, the general mind would be better informed and more likely to vote intelligently and rightly than at present. I do not hesitate to say that a strictly and bitterly partizan article scarcely influences a vote, for those who read such articles are the men girt with a wall of prejudice and incapable of changing an opinion. For whom are the editorials of a paper written at election time? Not for him who is already upon our side, but for him who wavers, whose judgment must be won over. The quiet stand taken by the *Montreal Star*, and the fair and thor-

ough statement of the claims of both political parties which formed one of the editorial comments of that journal upon the situation, was, I believe, of more value to the Conservative cause than a dozen inflammatory editorials would have been, and was certainly more in keeping with the dignity of the Press.

During the contest the term "turncoat" was freely bandied about, and was frequently resented. Yet what is there to barb the term and make it cause a rankling wound? "A foolish consistency is the hob-goblin of little minds," says Emerson; and then again he says, "With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. * * * Speak what you think now in hard words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day." He does not add, but the thoughtful mind will supply the hiatus, that both to-day and to-morrow should think well before speaking at all. Shall we remain dumb through youth and early manhood that we may not contradict ourselves in age? Shall we, on the other hand, abide by our early opinions, correct enough for that time and age, but now grown waterlogged in the flux of ideas in us and the tide of change without? The birds are consistent, they build their nests in their own way; but the palace of a king is better than the Indian wigwam, because men have not been consistent. He who does not keep pace with the times shall be left behind, and it is the man whose brain is like a sensitive photographic plate, or rather like a thermopile, who shall sway the multitude and in the end achieve his purpose. Sir John Macdonald has been termed the Old Wiggler by Mr. Blaine, and the term is not inapt. Every gentleman is a wriggler more or less, preferring to reach his object by going round another's prejudices rather than running up against them; and it is these gentlemen who win most of life's prizes.

The liberty of a subject to change his opinion is inalienable, and the man who can change his policy is better than he who cannot, for the one is a thinker while the other is a fossil. The only despicable turncoat is he whose coat alone is turned and whose convictions are unaltered; and he is despicable because he sails under false colours. "I hope," says Emerson, "in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency."

To avoid the charge of "turncoatism" it were well that men should join no political party. It is not a party but a policy that we should support, and unless we remember this, we shall be surprised to find the young politician on one side to-day and on the other in years to come, when his policy shall have been adopted with what modifications were found necessary.

One further reflection and I am done. I have remarked that scarcely was an opinion expressed by any one of importance which was not opposed by the cry of others that he was not a disinterested man. Show me a disinterested man in Canada and I will show you a man whose opinion is valueless. The man who by years of unremitting toil has honestly obtained an honourable position must be vitally interested in many undertakings, and must also be possessed of a practical knowledge that should make his opinion of greater value than that of the film-weaving dreamer of theories. Apply the test in other than political life, and note its absurdity. A bank manager, after careful study and the experience of years, speaks, say at the annual meeting, and lays down laws regarding sound banking; when some theorizer who has never seen a ledger or discounted a note remarks, "Oh! you are interested," and proceeds to give advice as a disinterested person. To which of these men is the most attention likely to be given? Carried out to its logical conclusion, the objection of being interested would result in legislation being handed over from men who have everything to lose, to paupers, tramps and outcasts of society. A certain European town is governed virtually from the workhouse, whose 15,000 old men retain their votes though all else has been lost. Would the party press advocate allowing only paupers to vote?

The only adequate refutation of an argument is an argument, and flippant and impertinent retorts or deliberate falsehoods which have been common of late deserve the severest condemnation. A self-respecting people will some day awaken to the knowledge that they are being imposed upon by a too partizan press, and a happier era shall dawn.

Montreal.

ARTHUR WEIR.