The Colonist.

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AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The statement of Mr. Percy Marks, special correspondent of the London Financial Times, in his interview with the Colonist, published in Saturday's issue, is of the highest importance and worthy of the closest attention of our readers. Mr. Marks made the definite statement that in a short time a powerful syndicate will commence the publication in London of a newspaper which will be expressly devoted to the task of fostering trade between Great Britain and Canada. He added that this is an incident in the campaign which is to be conducted by Mr. Chamberlain in favor of an Imperial zollverein. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of this statement. It means much to Canada, but much also to the Homeland. In Great Britain, Canada is as yet but imperfectly known and little understood. True, the past few years have done more than all the previous decades to bring Britain's oldest colony into closer relations with the parent land, but much remains to be done, much of prejudice and ignorance to be removed on both sides. The influence of such a publication as Mr. Marks has outlined would be an enormously potential factor in advancing the good work, the more so since Mr. Chamberlain's broad and boldly-declared Imperial policy has administered a shock to the outside commercial world which could hardly have been equalled even by Great Britain's declaration of war with a first-class power. That such a publication is a necessity, as also that it will incur no slight opposition and enmity, is abundantly evident from the tone of the foreign despatches coming in every day. We spoke just now of a declaration of war. In reality Mr. Chamberlain's policy is little else; since, though in itself a defensive measure, it cuts at the commercial heart-strings of every other civilized nation. Little wonder, then, at the outpourings of open wrath, hypocritical warning, and simulated commiseration which keep the wires hot from Paris and Berlin, St. Petersburg and New York. Little doubt, too, that the publication of a journal of influence designed to strengthen Mr. Chamberlain's hands in his good work, will add to the tide of angry consternation, and will be greeted with the bitterest animosity, both from outside enemies of Great Britain, and from that singular class at home, upon whose little minds the real, much less the potential, greatness of their Empire has not yet dawned. It is indeed unlikely that such wailings will be heeded, the more so when the remarkable fact, so plainly put forth by Mr. Marks, is considered—namely, that the great Cobden Club, whose dread name stood, unalterable as the law of the Medes and Persians, for a symbol of Great Britain's trade policy, is nine-tenths composed of foreigners, whose chief interests lie in France, Italy and Germany. This may be taken as effectually disposing of Mr. Chamberlain's chief obstacle to his grand and patriotic design. In the meantime, the appearance of the new publication will be watched for by all Canadians with the keenest interest.

A NEW EPOCH.

A somewhat pronounced step in advance is given with little comment in a despatch from Winnipeg the other day. This is the expressed opinion of the Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Manitoba, Hon. Hugh McKellar, to the effect that harvest excursions, bringing laborers from Ontario to the Manitoba wheat fields, will be no longer required, and that, in all probability, none will be run this year. The Deputy Minister, in an interview with a representative of the Toronto Mail and Empire, said: "Up to the present I do not anticipate any serious deficiency. Thousands of new farm hands have come into Manitoba and the Territories this spring in excess of former years, and the department has been hard at work finding places for them. The farmers have come to our assistance and engaged many more hands than usual to assist them in their spring work. The number of extra men who have been engaged will go a long way to help in taking care of the harvest. For the last two or three years I have been urging the farmers to employ more help by the year. They secure it at reasonable wages, they get more work done, and, as a matter of fact, they pay during the harvest one-half or perhaps nearly two-thirds of what it would cost them to secure the men for the whole year. The demand will, therefore, be less this year, for the farmers seem to see the force of this argument, and have been securing men this spring in excess of their usual requirements." This marks an important epoch in the settlement of the West. It means a very large increase in the permanent population of the prairie provinces. Under the old system many thousands of laborers came from Ontario in the harvest season, gathered in the harvest, and returned to their Eastern homes. It was a large, but strictly transient population. Apart from the labor it supplied, it doubtless did incalculable good in advertising to the older and more densely populated districts of the East the immense agricultural possibilities of Manitoba and the Northwest. But beyond that its usefulness ceased. It was here today and gone tomorrow, and took enormous sums of money out of the country, for the wages during the harvesting and threshing seasons often went to incredible figures. It is probably no exaggeration to say that the wages paid during these seasons in Manitoba and the Territories were the highest ever paid in any country to unskilled agricultural labor. And, with the exception of what might be spent by the men in an occasional carouse in Winnipeg and the smaller railroad towns, the bulk of this money went directly out of the country. Now, a change is evidently at hand. Everything that makes for increased permanent population on the great plains is of keen interest to British Columbia, the exporter of so much that is needed there in lumber, coal, fruit and fish. A steadily employed agricultural class means more for the Northwest than a dozen immigration booms. For these men, or the greater percentage of them, will stay. Their money will be spent in the country, where it is earned. A large majority of them will eventually have farms of their own, while others will engage in various businesses connected with the staple industry of the country. The cessation of the harvest laborers' excursion, picturesque and typical element though it was of the infancy of a great new country, will not be regretted by those who note in that cessation the second great step of the New West towards industrial and commercial permanence and stability.

ONE YEAR OF FREE CUBA.

The extent to which bad government can damage the material prosperity of a country has been demonstrated in Cuba by a much more pleasing proof than the usual exhibition of the influence of government upon prosperity. With enthusiasm similar to that which marked the inauguration of the Cuban republic last year, the Cubans, on May 20, celebrated the first anniversary of their independence. It is doubtful whether any other republic of modern times ever entered upon its career as easily and successfully as Cuba has done. Cuba has established a record among Latin-American republics, for none of them can compare with her in respect to the auspicious circumstances that mark her first anniversary. Secretary Root, who recently returned from a visit to the island, says in his despatch of congratulation to President Palma that the year's work has "confounded the enemies of Cuba and strengthened the courage and hope of her friends." The $500,000 net surplus left in the treasury when Governor Wood turned over the government to the new officials last year, has been increased a little over four times, the amount in the treasury on March 31 being nearly $2,700,000. The public order has been admirably maintained, with the exception of strike riots in Havana, the kind that frequently occur in the United States. The educational facilities have been increased, sanitation has been maintained, and other improvements of many kinds are being provided. To show how thoroughly the government is sustaining the sanitary measures, it is pointed out that the death rate, per thousand, is the lowest in the history of the island, being 21.19, while in Washington it is 21.21. Trade has increased considerably. We learn from an article in the New York Tribune that the tobacco crop has not been satisfactory because of unfavorable weather, but that the sugar crop has been the second largest in the history of the island. The Cuban legislature, though having had no experience in legislation, and therefore working slowly, has passed the reciprocity treaty, the $35,000,000 loan bill, and a tariff bill. This record speaks well for the Cubans as a law-abiding people, and one capable of self-government. Few people realized how many Cubans had governmental experience even under Spanish rule, and how many were qualified to take office and administer it well. When the government was turned over to the new officials, many army officers and newspapers predicted that all sorts of trouble would come to the Cubans, with the result that after a few weeks they would apply to the United States for annexation, or that the United States would be compelled to interfere. The chief thing to bring about this would be the failure of congress to grant reciprocity. The Brooklyn Eagle, which last year took a pessimistic view of the permanency of the new government, says that "the record of the last 12 months proves that these apprehensions were unjustified. Cast adrift to paddle her own canoe, Cuba has paddled it with skill and determination." The work of President Palma comes in for considerable praise by the press. "President Palma seems to be the right man for the helm of state," declares the Brooklyn Standard Union; "he is patriotic and, withal, level-headed." There are, however, two disorders in the Cuban body politic that, it thinks, are a cause for uneasiness. The first is a cumbersome and unduly expensive system of provincial government, which is provided for in the Cuban constitution to avoid a centralization of power in the hands of her national organization. Recent attempts to enforce it have been met with protests, and it is believed that Cuba must do away with the system or run the risk of some sort of internal trouble. The other is the $35,000,000 loan, with which the government intends to pay the so-called liberating army. The loan has been indorsed by the Cuban congress and President, but there is a hitch in the proceedings. If the veterans had not received encouragement in their hope for a speedy payment, they would have threatened an uprising. Still we may fairly say that Cuba's difficulties with the veterans of the revolutionary army are not greater than those any other country would necessarily have where a large body of its citizens had been in arms for a number of years in defence of their country, and suddenly found upon the conclusion of peace that their occupation was gone.

PREDIGESTED LITERATURE.

Of all the controversies of which we ever heard, one of the most extraordinary has arisen in the United States over "the art of skipping" in reading books. It was stirred by the following advice given in the Book Lovers' Magazine: "Let the book lover cultivate the art of skipping. It is an art, and it may be learned, mastered even, by the average reader. Follow your own instinct in it; nothing in the art of skipping is so sure as your own instinct. Read while your book holds you. The book lover offers himself a willing victim to his author. 'Here,' he says in effect, 'is my attention. If you can hold it, you are welcome to it. I rather hope you can hold it.' The battle is on. Does your interest lag? A long paragraph stares at you? Take the first sentence and jump straight to the last. Is the subject still the same? Go ahead. Has the subject changed? Dip into the middle of the paragraph. A glance gives you the connection and again you are away at a canter; before you know it you are reading in lines and paragraphs instead of in words and sentences." We remember hearing Lord Rosebery once remark in speaking at the opening of a free library, that he loved a thumb-marked book, and we remember also the storm of protest which that unlucky remark occasioned, and how Lord Rosebery was moved to explain that he did not refer to any literal thumb mark, but to that appearance of loving use which books that are read and re-read acquire. It is not difficult to understand what Lord Rosebery meant, although his expression was the most unhappy he could possibly have made use of. Similarly, it may be clear that the advice given above is all the treatment that a certain class of books deserves. But to give such advice about books as a whole, is monstrous, and much better advice about the books to whom it does apply, would be not to read them at all. The art of skipping as our authority says, can be mastered by the average reader. It is more easily managed by the reader who is at or under the average than by anybody else. Moreover, like any vice, once mastered, it is incurable. It is the way the literary critic has to read books to his own great sorrow and disgust. But the way a literary critic has to, is hardly the way a book lover ought to read a book. It reduces literature to the condition of an anatomical museum in which mere skeletons rattle, instead of the dear faces of living friends.

RECIPROCITY.

A certain gentleman in Minneapolis, Mr. Hay by name, who is the counsel of the Minneapolis branch of the National Reciprocity League, was instructed to visit Ottawa and Washington and prepare a report upon the prospects of reciprocity between Canada and the United States. This gentleman did so, and has handed in his report. Now we cannot look for an authoritative statement of Canadian policy in such a report. Cabinet ministers have a certain suave way of talking to people who interview them, and whose attitude on certain questions they already know, which is liable to lead these people unintentionally to deceive themselves. For that reason men often think they find in cabinet ministers' minds what really exists only in their own. They have been looking into what was really a mask and a mirror at the same time. But this particular gentleman from Minneapolis was a man trained in tracing elusive information, and qualified to suppress his own opinions while endeavoring to extract those of others. We are therefore not inclined to treat his report with the disdain it warrants from the extraordinary nature of what is contained in it. This commissioner declares that he found the Laurier government at Ottawa, and the Roosevelt administration at Washington, strongly in favor of a reciprocity treaty, and that the information he gathered led him to believe that a session of the High Joint commission would probably be convened at Ottawa about the first of September. He also expresses the opinion that the basis of the treaty will be reciprocity in natural products, and adds: "In addition to this I feel quite confident from such information as I have secured from high sources that by proper effort we can get a very material reduction on a large list of manufactures, and the abolition of the present British preferential tariff." The opinions, aims and hopes of the Minneapolis branch of the National Reciprocity League are a matter of absolute and total indifference to Canada. We know that by reciprocity in natural products manufacturers in the United States wish to drain Canada of her raw materials to aid their manufactures. The United States has absolutely nothing to offer to Canada in return. What natural products we do not ourselves produce we can admit free of duty to suit ourselves. What natural products we do produce we produce in such quantities that there is no necessity to import them. We have to export our surplus and the United States has to export its surplus of the same things. Both are sold in the world market. The only result of sending our natural products into the world market via the United States is to make the United States the broker of our business, and its railways our carriers. The policy of Canada has been set in an exactly opposite direction, both upon provincial and Dominion initiative, and if Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his colleagues either share or have inspired the delusions of Mr. Hay of Minneapolis upon the subject of reciprocity in natural products, there is something in store for them as soon as these delusions take form and shape in their own declarations of policy. While many manufacturers in the United States are anxious to get raw material out of Canada upon the easiest possible terms, they are also anxious to get their own manufactures into Canada upon the easiest possible terms. The brilliant idea has struck them of calling the one advantage they are anxious to secure an advantage to Canada, and admitting the other to be an advantage to the United States, and then of labeling the arrangement which will enable them to enjoy both, reciprocity. This has been the uniform method of the United States in dealing with Great Britain. But Canada Britain is not the negotiating party this time, and Canada, whose interests are directly affected, will be sharp enough to require very definite safeguards for their protection. A reciprocity treaty with the United States will be highly unpopular in Canada, no matter of what kind, but one attempted of the kind desired by the National Reciprocity League will bury the Laurier government forever.

TO DISCIPLINE THE ASSESSOR.

The great public of Eastern Canada does not appear to regard its municipal bodies with favor. Yesterday we chronicled the unkind determination of the Ontario provincial legislature to punish the Ottawa City Council because of an article in one of the newspapers of that city; now comes a despatch from Montreal to the effect that Mr. James Morgan, of the well known firm of Henry Morgan & Co., is about to discipline the municipal authorities of the city of ice-palaces, with the hope of enforcing a reform in the present system of assessment, which, says Mr. Morgan, places a premium upon the erection of poor and unsightly buildings. Mr. Morgan's plan of operations is sufficiently unique. The Morgan establishment is possibly, from an architectural point of view, the superior of any other store in Canada. Mr. Morgan proposes to change all this. He will erect a box-like structure of brick and mortar around the present handsome building of brown stone, which will, so he says, give it the appearance of a factory. To a query as to whether he did not think it would be a pity to, in this way, destroy the present handsome pile of buildings, Mr. Morgan replied, "Yes, it certainly will be, and I have had any number of prominent citizens in the store this morning to protest. But with me this change is purely a matter of dollars and cents. I have too long been subjected to the injustice of extortionate assessment; to being bled in a most flagrant manner. It appears to me, upon reflection, that the present Assessment Act is designed to bleed the successful man." This is rich—if a trifle rough on the Assessment Act, and its framers. Meanwhile, let us hope Mr. Morgan's revengeful spirit may not prove contagious. Otherwise it will be in order for some prophetic cartoonist to favor the public with a view of our principal Canadian towns as they will appear after being Morganized in the proposed manner.

WOMEN CONDUCTORS.

The Mayor of Montreal ought to have a presentation from the various bodies who struggle for "women's rights" in Canada. He, a public man, has, in a public interview, suggested a new and fascinating field for the energies of that enterprising sex, who are already rapidly reducing the mere man to his proper status as an inferior. A few days ago, at the close of the recent strike of the Montreal tramway employees, the Mayor was interviewed by some of the strikers. Quoth he, "If you men strike much more, you will probably never run the cars again. You are not aware, perhaps, that during the past few days the Street Railway Company has received several letters from South American cities, where women are being employed as street car conductors. The presidents of these companies made the assertion that women conductors were immensely superior to men, as they were more polite, more attentive to their duties, and in general gave better satisfaction than men." There was a pause of consternation among the Mayor's visitors, and then one of them, in a trembling voice, hazarded the suggestion that the Montreal public would not tolerate women conductors. The Mayor, however, begged the speaker to disabuse himself of that notion, desiring him to turn such of his intellect as he could spare from the contemplation of his own wrongs upon the indisputable fact that women were rapidly filling positions of every kind in the industrial world which had formerly been regarded as the exclusive privilege of men. "Montreal," said His Worship, with terrifying earnestness, "may yet see women conductors on her street railways." The deputation retired in dismay, to ponder over these bitter sayings; but it seems to us that the Mayor's remarks open up a wide and glorious field for Canada's wives and daughters, sisters and mothers. The question of civility and efficiency apart, it seems to us that the street railway companies throughout the Dominion should seize upon this proposal with avidity, because it would undoubtedly increase enormously the traffic and popularity of their lines. They might cost a little more, for who would have the heart to deny them an increase of wages when they asked for it, but the increased patronage of the line would more than cover it. And the railway companies, too! Why should not they follow suit? Fancy a Sisterhood of Locomotive Engineers! Certainly the Mayor of Montreal is a great man. We trust the Council of Women will fittingly recognize his useful suggestion.

IMPORTANT TO CANADA.

Recent advices from London, England, state that the papers there are poking a good deal of fun at Premier Seddon, of New Zealand, who is, as the home journals playfully put it, proposing to establish the New Zealand government as family butcher by special appointment to the British nation. Some of the more facetious journals have even dubbed the great New Zealander's project, "beef and mutton imperialism." This is very excellent fooling, but the Dominion of Canada is something of a stock-raiser herself, and could be more. It is, therefore, well worth our while to at least look with an attentive eye upon the details of Mr. Seddon's scheme. Briefly, then, the proposal contemplates the New Zealand government purchasing meat in the colony, branding it and shipping it to the commissioner in England, and selling it there at New Zealand government shops at practically cost price, believing the British consumer will soon appreciate the saving sufficiently to enable prices to be raised and a profit to be made from the business. It is pointed out by the English press, even in the midst of its gentle chaff, that, while the plan must command the warmest sympathy and good wishes, it is to be feared that Premier Seddon is reckoning without cold storage and other meat rings which are now so dominant a factor in the British meat trade. This may be so, but those who know Mr. Seddon consider him very far removed indeed from a fool, and it is quite on the cards that he is exceedingly well aware of what he is doing in the present instance. Rings of many kinds have been broken before now when they declined too firmly to expand the narrow area enclosed by their circumference; and the like may happen again. Moreover, he may be found to attempt the seemingly impossible in the face of almost certain death, the progress of the human race will come to a sudden stop.

There is loud trouble between the legislature of Ontario and the municipal authorities of Ottawa, and, as a result, certain measures intimately affecting that city are extremely liable to get the marble heart in the Ontario legislative assembly. It would appear from the details to hand, which border on the meagre, that the members of the Ontario legislature are even more sensitive to the criticisms of the press than those of legislatures west of Winnipeg. The trouble appears to have commenced with the publication of an article in the Ottawa Evening Journal of the 19th May, to the effect that a municipal delegation to the Ontario legislature had been treated with undue deception. Some keenly appreciative reader of the said article was kind enough to send a marked copy to each member of the provincial house. Their sensitiveness led them to a bitterness of feeling which is perhaps best outlined in an extract from a letter written by Mr. C. Berkeley Powell, M. P. P., one of the insulted law-givers, to the municipal Solons in council at Ottawa. Says the wrathful member:

"I beg to advise you that some anonymous busybody has sent to every member of this House in Toronto a marked copy of the Evening Journal of Friday, May 15, containing the sensational article 'Deputation Was Flimflammed,' marked prominently. This article attacks every member of the legislature except one, and is going to have a damaging effect on the Ottawa bill still in progress before the House."

The idea of a legislature visiting upon an inoffensive municipality a sensational article in a newspaper is distinctly funny, with a form of humor which is, we hope, confined to Ontario.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

CREAMERIES.

Sir,—The Salt Spring Island farmers are to be congratulated for the way they have brought their creamery to a head. It is only about eight or nine weeks since I called the first creamery meeting of the farmers of Salt Spring, and they have raised the required capital, elected their officers, chosen their site and are now starting to put their creamery up. This shows what farmers can do when they get together and make up their minds. Long before this creamery was thought of, I was told by the Nanaimo people that they were going to have a creamery, yet they don't seem to have got the same move on as Salt Spring. Now, Nanaimo, come along with your creamery and let all the butter on the local markets be one sound, uniform creamery butter.

We are doing our utmost to bring these ruinous strikes in our market towns to a close as soon as possible, and if we are successful the good markets will be open again for all your produce. There is another splendid chance for the Salt Spring people, that is in having a portable sawmill for the Island. They have thousands of acres of grand timber on the Island, and the lucky man who takes this scheme up and runs it himself, will make a small fortune.

A. H. GARDOM.

CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP.

Sir,—Knowing that you have been a consistent advocate of what is commonly termed "party lines," and that you are a loyal Conservative, I am surprised to find your leading articles since the change of government of a tenor calculated to sow seeds of discord in Conservative ranks.

Force of circumstances has placed Mr. McBride in a position where, without disloyalty to his recent Liberal associates in opposition, he has been enabled to take a step to advance the welfare of this province by carrying to victory the Conservative banner. All staunch party men will appreciate the manly stand he has taken, when, if personal ends only were to be served, he might have formed another hybrid government, and thus held on to office for two more years, instead of responding, as he has done to the wishes of the people and appealing at once to the electorate. You must be aware that if he had so desired, Mr. Richard McBride could have been chosen leader of the Conservative party at the Revelstoke Convention. A feeling of duty to his Liberal followers in the opposition party prompted him to decline to have his name brought before the convention in that connection.

Force of circumstances also might have placed, and very nearly did place, Colonel Prior in a position to likewise forward the interests of our party. Had the Lieut.-Governor granted him dissolution he would have acted precisely as Mr. McBride has done, in which case, I ask, wouldn't you have urged all Conservatives to rally to his support? I am sure you would, and moreover, I am certain that all of us would have responded to your call.

Let us therefore now forget personal disappointments and consider the welfare of our province, which is involved in the success or failure of our party at the polls.

It is not surprising to find the Gait organ which so recently was fulsome in its praises of Messrs. McBride and McPhillips, now turning its venomous fangs on them for their party loyalty. But, to put it mildly, it is disappointing to find the Conservative organ disposed to provoke bitterness and jealousies among Conservatives. Let us present a united front when we meet the malignants at the polls. Let every true Conservative prepare to follow the leadership of Mr. McBride, until he has proved himself unworthy, just as we would have done had the mantle fallen upon the shoulders of Colonel Prior or Mr. Helmcken, or any other good Conservative.

F. S. BARNARD.

PRESS COMMENT.

In so far as the public administration of a country is swayed by bribery it is only fooling the people to put them through the form of electing their rulers. Indeed, so long as corruption is notorious it is probable that, instead of being fooled, a large proportion of the people will join in the general game of knavery and sell their votes, and the election of representatives intended to will be a solemn farce, the real rule being in the hands of those who can pay for it.—Montreal Witness.

There are apparently a good many people who believe that because Mr. Chamberlain has so declared, a scheme of preferential trade within the Empire is close at hand. Mr. Chamberlain's views are, of course, of the greatest interest, and the scheme could hardly have secured a better qualified backer. But it is just as well to remember that before such a plan can be put into operation a mountain of prejudice will have to be submerged under a sea of education.—Montreal Gazette.

The dropping of the name of Hon. Mr. Ross from the list of officers of the Dominion Alliance is a serious business. It was done without any previous explanation to the public; but it means that the temperance men who have been intimately associated with Mr. Ross for many years have at least became thoroughly disgusted with that politician's duplicity. It means that they have found the trickster out.—Hamilton Spectator.

When Secretary Wyndham met the representatives of the Irish landlords and tenants and laid before them his land purchase scheme, William O'Brien pushed his chair back from the table and exclaimed: "For the first time in my life I say, 'God Save the King!'" Lord Clanricarde, the most arrogant and most unmerciful of Irish landlords, capped this utterance with the words: "For the first time in my life I say, 'God save Ireland!'"—Buffalo News.

The Montreal street car employees' strike has collapsed and the men have returned to work. The whole affair has formed another striking example of the evils of irresponsible interference by the agitator, and the result has been disastrous to the agitators. The employees at the time of the last strike arrived at a satisfactory agreement with the company, but as the result of intermeddling on the part of the emissaries of the International union, they broke their agreement and went on strike again. These meddling fools sympathy, without which no strike can succeed in this country, where the spirit of British fair play applies alike to employee and employer.—Ottawa Citizen.

A lawsuit which may probably be claimed as the oldest in the world is reported from the Tremina. The two communes of Gallio and Foza have been for four centuries in litigation for the possession of an extensive tract of woodland, which is said to be very valuable. The origin forest, with trees of colossal size, which no man dares to touch. Spots are still pointed out where, 200 years ago,