The Colonist.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1899.

THE WAR.

Yesterday's advices from South Africa were absolutely nil, and as both the east and west coast cables are now working, the presumption is that there is not much news to tell. To impatient people it may be as well to say that there never was a war in which delays did not occur.

The great interest in yesterday's despatches attached to the announcement that a second Canadian contingent would be accepted of such composition, numerically and otherwise, as the government chooses to send. We assume that another full shipload will go forward, or say 1,000 men. This will be a mixed corps of horse, foot and artillery. For the first named, the Mounted Police will be relied upon in part. They ought to do excellent service. There will be plenty of volunteers for service as soon as it is known what is wanted.

The comments of the Continental press are very bitter. The French newspapers conveniently forget the experience of their country in Tonquin and Madagascar. The Germans, with no experience in war beyond sea, and with their ideas of their own military prowess exalted by their easy victory over France, are inclined to criticize severely the manner in which the campaign is being conducted. It is not pleasant to read the things that are said about us, but the perusal of them only makes a loyal Briton clench his teeth a little harder. We have no disposition to underrate the gravity of the situation; but we have every confidence that the Empire will emerge from it purified, stronger and more united than ever. If it is necessary to land an overwhelming force in South Africa, one must be sent. The greater the effort made the greater will be the result, the more eminent our prestige when all is over.

Yesterday was very barren of war news, the sole feature being the refusal of the war office either to admit or deny the report that Gen. Buller had crossed the Tugela, and that Gen. Methuen's line of communication had been cut.

The call for reinforcements for South Africa is being met in a noble manner in the colonies as well as in the Mother Country. There will be no difficulty about procuring as many men as may be wanted.

We do not understand the alarmist articles which some of the London papers are printing about India. The best way to preserve peace is to carry on war in a manner that admits of no other construction than that the Empire is confident of its ability to meet any emergency and determined to win at any cost. It is to be remembered in this connection that only the pessimistic comments of the press are telegraphed to America, and these are given without the qualifying context.

In the absence of definite information from the seat of war, it is hardly worth while speculating upon what is transpiring there.

Accounts of the battle of Tugela are coming in very slowly, and judgment ought to be reserved as to the responsibility for the repulse until details have been received. It is not pleasant to be told that our forces were taken by surprise. We shall look with anxiety for the explanation that may be offered.

THEIR ONLY HOPE.

The only hope of the Semlin-Cotton government lies in the expectation of being able to keep their former supporters in line by a threat of a dissolution. They talk of a dissolution as though it were in their power to have one whenever they wish. But the prerogative of dissolution is exercised by the Lieutenant-Governor alone. He may grant one on the request of his ministry or he may refuse. We have no means of knowing what course he would take, if Mr. Semlin asked for a dissolution, but we do know that if he followed constitutional precedent he would decline. An opinion seems to be generally held in this province that a defeated ministry is entitled to an appeal to the people, but there is little authority for such a proposition. Indeed the weight of authority is quite the reverse. We do not say that no such cases have occurred, but only that all the leading cases, all those that are relied upon by writers on constitutional law as establishing the practice, are the other way. Ministerial defeats have occurred in British Columbia, but a defeated ministry has never been granted a dissolution. We doubt if there is a precedent in Canadian history for such a thing, while there are several precedents, where a request for a dissolution has been denied. We hesitate, therefore, to believe that the Lieutenant-Governor will set a new precedent in this regard, but think he will follow the constitutional principle, which treats the expressed will of the house as reflecting the opinion of the people, and withdraw his confidence from advisers from whom the house has withdrawn its confidence.

Those persons, who may be in some degree influenced by a fear of dissolution, would do well to consider for a little the present composition of the government and ask themselves how long such a ministry is likely to last. The habit is to speak of the Semlin-Cotton government, but every one knows that Mr. Semlin, with all his many good qualities, is only the titular head of the administration. Mr. Cotton is the government, lock, stock and barrel. He holds two portfolios, the only portfolios of any importance in respect to the finances, and has hidden his colleagues away in obscure corners of the cabinet. It is an extraordinary thing that this province is so short of men fit for public position that Mr. Cotton must needs be both paymaster and payee of all public moneys. No greater evidence of the weakness of the government can be asked than the retention of these offices by Mr. Cotton. Why was not one or the other of the portfolios held by Mr. Cotton given to some one else? Mr. Prentice might have been offered one, and if he had accepted it and offered for re-election the cloud upon his title to his seat would have been removed. We do not say Mr. Prentice would have accepted the offer, but it might have been made to him. Mr. Wells carried a constituency for the government, which the present opposition held at the general election. Why was he not recognized by the offer of one of Mr. Cotton's portfolios? Why have neither of them been placed at the disposal of one of the Island government supporters? There are other gentlemen on the right hand of the Speaker, who could creditably fill either of the positions. Why was none of them selected? It is well known that Mr. Cotton was quite ready to hand over a portfolio to a member of the opposition. It is therefore very strange that he should have withheld one from his friends. He has probably relied upon his ability to keep the latter in hand by the threat of a dissolution; but we are confident that he will fail.

WORKING IN MINES.

Mr. Clute, who is examining into the working of the eight-hour law at the instance of the Dominion government, is bringing out considerable interesting information. The evidence, as far as we have been able to examine it, seems to demonstrate the entire fallacy of the claim that men would or could do as much work in eight hours as in ten. The manager of the Ymir mine testified that it cost his company 15 per cent. more to sink a shaft with eight-hour shifts than with ten-hour shifts. Practical miners admitted that there is considerable loafing indulged in when men work in ten-hour shifts, so that the actual working time was probably reduced thereby to nine hours. They thought there would be less proportionate loafing if the hours of labor were eight. It is claimed that a hammer man can do as much work in eight hours as in ten, provided he is willing to do so, but where machines are used, as in the best mines, the case is very different, for of course a machine can do more work in the longer time. Mr. B. W. Grahame, who worked by contract in the Silver King, said that they used to make from $5.90 to $6.40 a day under the old system, but the average is much less under the eight-hour plan. He said that if he were working on a contract he would certainly work ten hours.

Mr. Grahame gave some interesting testimony as to the feeling of the miners. He said that under the old system the relations of the miners and mine-owners were perfectly satisfactory. He had heard the new law discussed, but the miners did not appear to want it, and when it was passed they took no particular interest in it. He spoke of the scarcity of good miners. He believed that if the companies could get good miners and pay them $3.50 for eight hours they would get as much satisfaction out of them as out of an average crew working ten hours, but frankly admitted that he did not know where the men could be got.

Mr. Croasdaile, general manager of the Hall Mines, said that under the ten-hour system the men who worked by contract averaged $4.48 a day, but under the eight-hour system they only averaged $3.48. He said that a great many of the best miners had left the country, when the new law came in force, to avoid being tyrannized over by the Union.

On the whole the evidence seems to bear out the position taken by this paper, that the eight-hour law was not asked for by the miners and is not a piece of legislation in the interest of either employers or employed.

A SUGGESTION.

The Imperial government has expressed its readiness to accept all Colonial offers of contingents for South Africa, preference being given for mounted corps. We suggest that British Columbia ought to come to the front with a squadron, say 200 strong, of rough riders. The horses and the men can be readily got here. The suggestion is that a distinctively British Columbia contingent should be formed, the expense of raising and equipping it to be borne locally. This is worth thinking over, and some of our wealthy citizens might take the matter up. If a beginning were made there would be plenty of offers to supply horses and accoutrements from persons of small means. We believe there would be plenty of volunteers for the service.

Something of this kind, quite distinct from anything the Dominion government may do, would be the best proof of loyalty to the Empire that this province could offer.

It might be well for the government to bear the expense, and then we would all contribute something towards it.

PARTY LINES.

Sir Charles Tupper in his Vancouver speech spoke in favor of the introduction of federal lines in local politics. It was known before that Sir Charles favored this movement, and we do not think that his public declaration to that effect will affect the situation one way or another. The people of British Columbia, while glad to hear what any one may have to say on this subject, will make up their minds for themselves, and we believe their verdict will be that federal leaders should leave provincial matters severely alone. It is quite easy to understand why gentlemen, who like Sir Charles Tupper, have spent all their lives in a contest between Conservatism and Liberalism, should desire to see these issues extended into every provincial field, but we do not believe that this view is shared by any considerable number of the people of this province.

We are very strongly of the opinion that the federal party, which seeks to introduce federal issues into local politics in British Columbia is courting a defeat, the influence of which may extend much further than the Colonist would like to see it go. At present public sentiment in this province is very strongly in favor of the Conservative party in federal politics, but if any effort is made to force federal issues into the local field, we would not care to be responsible for the result. We therefore respectfully suggest to the leaders of the Conservative party that they will do wisely to keep their hands off British Columbia's local affairs.

THE BOUNDARY BAY SCHEME.

To-night the city council will discuss the proposed by-law to lend the aid of the city to a scheme to construct a railway from Boundary Bay to Chilliwack, to establish a ferry connection with the Victoria & Sidney line, to acquire that railway, and to extend it to connect with the E. & N. railway. While every one in Victoria would be glad to see some kind of railway connection established with the Mainland, the proposed plan will hardly commend itself to the taxpayers.

Who is behind this project? Mr. C. E. Renouf has been most active in championing it, but he has taken the precaution to say at one or more public meetings that when the by-law has been adopted his connection with the enterprise will cease, so that he is not to be regarded as the responsible individual. Trustees are named in the by-law, but we do not understand that they are promoting the scheme. It is calculated that certain individuals shall subscribe $100,000. As yet not a dollar has been promised. There is no man or combination of men who are prepared to say that, if the city adopts the proposed by-law the scheme will be taken up. We submit that the city council, if it has the right to decline to submit a by-law under any circumstances, should exercise that power when one involving the prospective pledging of the credit of the city to a large and indefinite amount is brought forward without the slightest guarantee that any one is prepared to carry the proposal into effect. It is not suggested by any one that the $500,000 which the city is to be asked to contribute as stock will secure the construction of the proposed railway and ferry. It is not proposed that the city shall undertake to work the scheme through. Now we submit that a proposal, which is such an insubstantial thing that no one stands prepared to assume the responsibility of carrying it out, ought not to be considered by the people of Victoria for a single moment.

The scheme contemplates that the Victoria & Sidney railway shall be acquired and extended to a junction with the E. & N. No one pretends to know for a certainty what this will cost, but it has been said that Mr. Paterson thinks $150,000 will be sufficient. The undisclosed promoters of the scheme do not state how they propose to extend the line to connect with the E. & N. If they propose to deflect the V. & S. out to the bank of the Arm and run down along that water front, the proposed $150,000 will not half pay for the right-of-way. If they propose, as the by-law indicates, to run down through some street or streets, the right-of-way will cost nothing at all, which will leave $150,000 to pay for a wharf at Sidney, the balance, or something over $100,000, to go to Mr. Paterson for the railway. Some people may think that a portion of the money will be required to put the V. & S. into condition to handle transcontinental traffic, but Mr. Paterson, on being asked about this at a public meeting, said that the road was already fit for such business. Mr. Renouf has said on several occasions that no one felt like asking Mr. Paterson how much he will take for the V. & S.; but we submit that one thing the people of Victoria will want to know is how much Mr. Paterson is to be given for the railway. As a matter of business we submit that this lies at the very foundation of the whole matter. Before the by-law is submitted to a vote the ratepayers ought to have definite information upon the following points in this connection:

How is it proposed to extend the V. & S. into the centre of the city?

What will be the approximate cost of the proposed terminals at Sidney?

What will be the cost, if any, of putting the V. & S. into condition to handle transcontinental traffic?

How much is Mr. Paterson willing to take and surrender his interest in the V. & S.?

If the V. & S. is to be extended down any one or more of the public streets, is it contemplated to compensate abutting owners for the damage resulting to their property, and if so what will the amount of such damage be?

All that any one knows upon these points is what can be gathered from remarks of Mr. Renouf at several public meetings, to the effect that he did not feel like asking Mr. Paterson squarely what he would take for the railway, but had asked him if he thought $150,000 would be enough to cover the extension to the city, the terminals at Sidney, and the purchase of his interest in the road, and he had replied that he did. Will the city council seriously propose to ask the citizens to vote $500,000 into any such blind scheme as this? The worst of it is that the city is not asked to contribute a certain sum and have done with it, but is expected to become a stockholder in a company—to buy a pig in a poke. Would any individual consider such a proposition for a moment if it involved his own money? Would he not insist on having more information? We fancy that he would unless he were bereft of ordinary common sense. We are not arguing that the city council ought to refuse to submit a by-law for which the requisite number of ratepayers have asked, for we believe thoroughly in the principle of permitting the people to determine such questions for themselves. But we do say that it is the duty of the city council, as the custodian of the interests of the taxpayers, to insist before any by-law involving a charge upon the property of the taxpayers is submitted to a vote, that definite information shall be given as to whether the scheme to which the money is to be voted can be carried out, and the uses to which it is proposed to put the money.

The proposal is that the by-law shall not take effect unless certain contingencies are complied with. These are not specified in the by-law but it is understood that one of these is that $100,000 of stock shall be subscribed by private individuals, another is that the provincial and federal governments shall give certain bonuses, another is that the Mainland municipalities shall take a certain amount of stock and the last is that the remainder of the cost of the project, which is not to exceed $1,500,000, shall be raised by the flotation of bonds. We submit as a business proposition that the undisclosed promoters of this scheme are putting the cart before the horse. A more businesslike proposition would have been for the promoters to have obtained a subscription of the necessary stock from private persons, to have obtained a careful estimate of the whole cost of the project in detail, to have gone into the money market and made a conditional agreement for the flotation of the bonds, and then come to the city, the municipalities and the governments asking for aid. Or they might very properly have approached the governments before attempting to arrange for the bonds. If this had been done something like a definite proposal could have been made to the ratepayers; but none can now be made. At one of the meetings called to discuss this matter, a speaker asked why more exact figures as to the cost had not been obtained, but only such a general report as Mr. Bell was able to make from a very cursory examination. The answer was there was no money to pay for such an exact examination as would be necessary; that the only sum available was the small amount of $250 voted by the city for the purpose. Yet every one knows, or ought to know, that before a dollar can be raised on bonds, such an examination and report will have to be made. Who is to pay for it? Not the city, for none of the city's money will be available until all the conditions imposed by the by-law have been complied with. Yet until such an examination and report have been made, no one can pretend to say whether the project can be carried out for the sum proposed. Here are some matters in addition to those mentioned above upon which no one has any definite information:

The availability of the proposed ferry landing at White Rock, Boundary Bay, and the cost of constructing terminals there.

The cost of the right of way through the municipalities between the Coast and Chilliwack.

The cost of the line between Boundary Bay and Chilliwack.

There is not a financier in the world who would talk five minutes with a railway promoter with no more information on these points than has been given to the public. We know that Mr. Bell is very well informed as to the cost of railway construction through a portion of the Mainland, which the proposed railway would traverse, but he does not claim to have made such an examination of the road from White Rock to Chilliwack as will enable him to give more than an approximation of the cost. There are other matters to be considered in connection with this project, but in this article we have confined ourselves to those which lie right upon the surface and touch the financial side of the proposal. The policy of the proposal is a matter for the ratepayers; but the responsibility of seeing that before the ratepayers are asked to pronounce upon the scheme, they are put in possession of something that can be called definite information as to its feasibility from a financial standpoint rests with the city council.

We print the by-law in extenso this morning, and only regret that it is impossible in the space available to comment upon it in detail. Two or three matters may be mentioned in passing. One of them is that the by-law authorizes the proposed trustees to use the money for the purposes of the proposed railway and ferry "or for such other purpose as the trustees may deem advisable." This is certainly a very extraordinary request to make to the ratepayers. A second notable feature of the by-law is that it provides for the recovery by the city of damages against the company. Now we have been told that only $700,000 of stock would be needed to secure the carrying out of the project and of this the city is to pay five-sevenths. Therefore the city is to be given a right of action against itself, if a company upon whose directorate it has a single representative infringes any of the conditions of the by-law. Another feature of the case is this: The city is asked to subscribe $500,000 of stock. The plan contemplates a bond issue of $509,000. These bonds cannot be floated at par. No financial man would pretend for an instant that they can be. If they could be placed at 80, they would be well placed. This would mean that to raise the necessary $509,000 at least $600,000 of bonds would have to be sold. If default were made in the payment of interest, the city would have to assume the bonds or lose its $500,000 of stock, and by and bye, when the Victoria & Sidney railroad bonds fall due, the city must take care of these or lose that road. The by-law therefore contemplates that the city may incur a responsibility of at least $1,400,000, and as much more than the estimated $1,500,000 as the project shall be found to cost. The ultimate obligation which the city may incur under the proposed scheme may reach $2,000,000. Why, may we ask, is it proposed to capitalize the company at $2,000,000 if the project is to cost only $1,500,000, and $809,000 of this is to be raised by bonds and bonuses?

REPRESENTATION.

The Vancouver World deals at length with the question of redistribution. It is very frank about it and advocates the wholesale reduction of the representation of the Island, claiming that Victoria's representation should be reduced to two, that North and South Victoria should be consolidated and given one, and that the same should be done with North and South Nanaimo. It also thinks that the representation of Vancouver should be reduced one-half. It would not interfere with the Fraser river constituencies or Cassiar, but thinks the Boundary district ought to have a representative. Our contemporary cites without disapproval the contention of some that the representation of the province is "excessively large."

We do not intend to make any argument in regard to the proposal to reduce the representation of the Island constituencies, but we take issue with the claim that the province is over-represented. We are more inclined to the view that the numerical strength of the legislature may with propriety be increased from time to time. This is not a matter that can be determined by any hard and fast rule. Each province ought to have a representative suited to its special conditions. British Columbia is very large. Its settled portions are widely separated from each other. The wants of the various sections are many and diverse. The fact that the Boundary district cries out for a representative of its own illustrates the nature of the case. This district thinks its wants cannot be properly looked after unless some one is sent to the legislature specially charged with the duty of looking after them.

The legislature will, in our opinion, act very wisely if it leaves the redistribution of representation alone until after the next census. In the meantime if it is proposed to make a new riding in the Boundary country, we do not suppose any one will seriously object.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

According to the theory of constitutional government the ministry for the time being must enjoy the confidence of the crown or its representative. Only by the most violent stretch of the imagination can it be supposed that the gentlemen composing the government of British Columbia have the confidence of the Lieutenant-Governor. Mr. Semlin is nominally Premier, but every one knows that he is not Premier in fact. Mr. Cotton absorbs two offices, and is in fact the whole government, yet unless "common rumor is a common liar" Mr. Cotton never was persona grata with the Lieutenant-Governor. Messrs. Henderson, Hume and McKechnie are very amiable gentlemen, but they have no confidence in themselves and it would be absurd to suggest that the Lieutenant-Governor can have confidence in them as advisers. His Honor has never felt it to be his duty to inform the Colonist as to his feelings towards his alleged advisers, but we fancy that they are akin to those of the fellow, who when told that two young attorneys had been appointed to defend him exclaimed: "Both of 'm. Well, then. I plead guilty." It is little else than a farce that the affairs of this great province, in which there is so much to be done, should be in the hands of such a ministry as the present one, and the Lieutenant-Governor must realize this as fully as any one else. To suppose that he will make any effort to save their political bacon when the house turns them down is ridiculous.

THIRTY YEARS AGO.

The above heading in an Eastern newspaper suggested a reference to the Colonist files of thirty years ago, and we mention some of the advertisers of that date, thinking that the names may remind the older residents of things they may have forgotten. The first advertisement in the paper is that of Sproat & Co., who represented the Royal Insurance Co., and did business on Wharf street and also sold groceries and liquors; Henry Nathan & Co. advertised groceries and liquors at their business house on Wharf street. Thomas Leit Stahlschmidt offered pianos and saddlers hardware for sale. Jesse Cooper had a stock of boots and shoes opposite Wells, Fargo & Co.'s on Yates street. T. L. Fawcett & Co. sold sewing machines on Government street. Thomas Cameron built coaches and wagons on Cormorant street. Thomas Russell insisted that there were no beans, no chickory and no adulteration in the coffee which he sold on the corner of Fort and Blanchard. Ld. Lowenberg had money to loan and real estate for sale at his office on Government street near Broughton. Promis & Saunders sold groceries and liquors on Johnson street. C. Frank Barnard, M. D., practised dentistry on Douglas street, south of Fort. F. J. Barnard despatched an express from Victoria every alternate Friday. T. Allsop had money to loan and real estate for sale at his office on Government street near Broughton. Hayward & Jenkinson, on Langley street, had a lot of barrels and staves for sale. J. Fried had just refurnished the St. Nicholas hotel on Government street, while F. S. Bushell & A. E. Mordaunt, who ran the "Blue Post" on the corner of Johnson and Douglas, had just dissolved partnership. Dr. Ching Fan advertised some remarkable cures made by him. Thomas C. Nuttall was agent for the Phoenix Insurance Co. of London. R. Broderick & Co. advertised 2,240 lbs. of coal for $11. James Trimble, mayor, and William Leech, city clerk, advertised a by-law to provide for greater cleanliness of the city. A. Cassamayov & Co. sold tobacco and liquors, and F. Dalby took photographs. Frederick Reynolds ran the London Market and was purveyor by appointment to Her Majesty's navy; and John Murray managed the Victoria Market on Johnson street. Mrs. Johnston conducted the English Bazaar on Fort street, and the Bailey hotel was in full blast on Langley street. H. Gaston called the Queen Charlotte Coal Mine Company together in special meeting. Mrs. G. Mason ran a boarding house on Fort street, between Douglas and Broad. A. H. Francis, who sold groceries, testified to the value of advertising. C. Bossi sold groceries and liquors, and William Andean ladies' underwear, oil paintings and similar things. J. H. Turner & Co. had just received a stock of goods by the Medora, and Mitchell & Johnson had 25,000 fruit trees for sale. J. Heywood wanted everyone to buy his sausages. Richard Carr had flour and feed for sale on Wharf street. Leneveu & Eckstein had just received a lot of salt. Noltemeier Bros. sold boots and shoes, Piper Olympia oysters, and Morris Dobrin dry goods. The auctioneers were J. P. Davies & Co. and Lumley Franklin. John Weiler advertised wall paper.

MR. SIFTON.

A report from Ottawa, in which we place little credence, is that Mr. Sifton is to be asked to surrender his present portfolio, if not to retire from the cabinet. We do not believe this, because such a line of policy would be suicidal on the part of any government, and especially so on the part of the Laurier administration, seeing that it would also call for the resignation of Sir Louis Davies because of Liberal reverses in Prince Edward Island. Nevertheless the result of the Manitoba elections must be a great blow to Mr. Sifton's prestige and influence. His party will have little use for a man who cannot carry even one out of three ridings in his own constituency, and the Brandons went Conservative at the late election.

Mr. Sifton has been far from a success at the head of his department. He muddled the Yukon business scandalously. He has made experiments in immigration of very doubtful wisdom. But what is worse than all this from a party standpoint, he has made serious breaches in the ranks of the Liberals by his ill-advised methods. If the whole West is swinging over to the Conservatives, Mr. Sifton is in a great measure responsible for it. He will be retained in office no doubt; Sir Wilfrid is not likely to think of dropping him, and the longer he is there the better the chances for Conservative success. Sifton and Tarte form a combination fatal to any ministry.

The war has a stimulating effect upon the poet crop. But who will write the song of the war? No one has done anything like it yet.

Mr. Tarte says he fully agrees with his colleagues in regard to the second contingent. Mr. Tarte evidently has learned the wisdom of coming in when it rains.

The Island Sentinel says that the Mine Owners' Association propose to offer the leadership of a political party to Mr. H. D. Helmcken; but we do not know that we should look to the Sentinel for authoritative information on such a subject.

Here is a question upon which some light should be thrown. The estimated cost of the Victoria-Chilliwack project is $1,500,000. It is proposed to capitalize the company at $2,000,000, to borrow $509,000 on bonds and get $390,000 from the government. This makes $2,899,000 or $1,399,000 more than what is alleged to be the outside cost. What is to be done with this amount?

It is a favorite trick of the Times, when it cannot answer an argument, to raise the cry of misrepresentation. Last night it says that the Colonist misrepresented what occurred at a meeting in regard to the examination of the proposed Chilliwack route. Our contemporary has forgotten the circumstances. When the speaker referred to complained of the lack of information, he was told that only the $250 was available to pay for a survey. He was also asked what he thought it would cost, and he named a sum; whereupon he was asked what he would give towards it, and he replied $50. Mr. Renouf did say that Mr. Bell had access to the De Cosmos survey, but it was pointed out that this did not touch a vital part of the new scheme, namely, the terminals and connections with White Rock, Boundary Bay, and the availability of that point for a landing.

Already Canadians are offering their services to their country, and the strength of the second contingent will be limited only by the willingness of the government. Practically the Imperial authorities have given us carte blanche as to men and the arm of the service to which they shall belong. Let us send five thousand. That is the best answer to make to European calumnies.

Mr. Helmcken, M. P. P., has been in correspondence with the department of the interior with the view of having the whole Songhees reserve valued by the board of arbitration, which is dealing with the E. & N. right-of-way. Pending the return of Mr. Sifton to Ottawa the matter must remain in abeyance, but Mr. Helmcken hopes for a favorable reply. The idea is an excellent one, especially if the city is to obtain possession of the reserve as Alderman Hayward proposes.

BODWELL-FERGUSON.

Former Victorian Married at Seattle on Monday Afternoon.

At Seattle on Monday afternoon Mr. Frank F. V. Bodwell, N. P. R. agent at Vancouver, and a brother of Mr. E. V. Bodwell, Q. C., of this city, was united in marriage to Miss E. Ferguson, of Seattle. The Seattle Post-Intelligencer says of the marriage:

"A pretty and interesting marriage ceremony took place yesterday afternoon in the parlors of the Rainier Grand hotel, Frank Vining Fyfe Bodwell, of Vancouver, B. C., and Miss Emilia Ferguson, of Seattle, being the contracting parties. Mr. Bodwell is a well-known real estate and insurance man of the British Columbia city, and Miss Ferguson is the daughter of Col. David Ferguson, who resides at a pretty country home on Lake Washington, about a mile north of Madison park. The ceremony was performed by Rev. I. Cheal, of Tacoma, in the presence of only a few friends of Mr. Bodwell and Miss Ferguson. The hotel was elaborately decorated for the affair. The parlor where the wedding took place was decorated with flowers and vines in abundance. At the front of the hotel, stretching from the curbstone to the door, was a canvas canopy and a carpet leading half way through the hall. Mr. and Mrs. Bodwell left on the afternoon train for San Francisco, where the honeymoon will be spent."

THE CANADIANS PRAISED.

Invaluable Mechanical Services Performed on Their Way to the Fighting Line.

London, Dec. 12.—The military experts, commenting on to-day's war news, insist upon the admirable work done by the colonial troops. The St. James's Gazette to-day says:

"The New Zealanders, near Colesberg, attacked the Boers on an important hill, and drove them off with loss. The New South Wales Lancers admirably co-operated with our cavalry in the same neighborhood.

"The Canadians at Orange River station, have been showing their equality as yet in a way not less important, though less showy. Being, for the most part, handy men, accustomed to take up any job that fell in their way, they have been invaluable on the very necessary work of building railway sidings, erecting platforms, and in many needful duties essential to the progress of the campaign. Their loyalty and discipline in undertaking this dull work is better proof of their real military value than almost any success in fighting. We know they will be plucky and cool in action. Canadians have shown their long home training. Colonial campaigning experience has not been lost on them, and they are now getting their reward in being on to the front."

PUPILS' RECITAL.

First of a Series Given by the Pupils of the Austin Conservatory Yesterday.

Yesterday afternoon the pupils of the Austin Conservatory of Music held the first of a series of monthly matinee recitals in Waitt's hall. The pupils acquitted themselves in a manner that must have been extremely gratifying to their teachers. It certainly was enjoyable to the audience, who will no doubt look forward with interest to the next recital. Yesterday's programme was as follows:

Piano Duet—"Air de Ballet, op. 20"....Chaminade
Miss M. Fell, Miss M. John.
Violin Solo—"In Memoriam" .....Austin
Miss Elinor Dunsmuir.
(Accompanist, Miss Peters.)
Piano Solo—"Madrigal" .....F. Lack
Miss Marion Fell.
Contralto Solo.....
Miss E. Worlock.
Sonate for Violin and Piano in A Minor
Allegro.....Kucken
Violin, Miss E. Cartmel. Piano, Miss G. Peters.
Piano Solo—"A Shepherd's Tale". H. Nevin
Miss Olive Peters.
Contralto Solo.....
Miss E. Worlock.
Violin Solo—"Spanish Dance"...Moskowski
Piano Solo—"Berceuse".....Ludwig Schytte
Miss Mattie John.
Trio—"Two Little Camrades".Otto Langley
1st Violin, Miss Peters; 2nd Violin, Miss V. Heisterman; Piano, Miss Olive Peters.

THE TIME HAS ARRIVED,

For you to buy your Xmas Fruits.
We have the very finest, all cleaned and made ready for use.
MINCEMEAT all ready for the pie, and PLUM PUDDING all ready for the table.

Jap. Oranges . . . 50cts. box
Fresh Island Eggs . 40cts. doz.
" Eastern " . 20cts. doz.
Port Wine . . . 50cts. bottle
Sherry . . . . . 50cts. bottle

MORGAN'S EASTERN OYSTERS.

DIXI H. ROSS & CO.