The Colonist.

THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 1899.

THE CLAIMS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

We are glad that Alderman Beckwith made a reference at the last meeting of the City Council to the extract from the Halifax Chronicle printed in the Colonist of the 26th instant. The matter is not one that comes specially within the scope of the Council's business, but it is of great public importance, and this excuses any reference to it, which the alderman might see fit to make. There is no reason to complain that too much attention is given to subjects of this nature. If there is ground for criticism at all it is because too little notice is taken of them.

The Halifax paper took the position that British Columbia has had quite its share of public expenditure, and that the relative contributions of the provinces to the general revenue do not form a safe test for the distribution of public expenditures. We will speak of the latter first, and desire to say that we do not regard it as anything like a final test of the propriety of a public expenditure. Nevertheless it is an important matter to be taken into consideration when public expenditures are asked for. One of the chief principles which govern, or at least ought to govern, the appropriation of money for public works, is their profitableness. If it can be shown that the direct gain to the treasury will be more than the cost of the proposed work, a strong prima facie case is made out for it. Statistics, covering a number of years, show that the people of British Columbia are very heavy contributors to the revenue of the Dominion, and that any project, that opens up a new portion of the province to settlement or facilitates the development of a portion already partly occupied, is certain to lead to a very large increase in the revenue of the Dominion. Thus it is easy to demonstrate that if a million dollars are expended in railway construction in almost any part of this province, the number of people who would be led to establish themselves along the line would be so great and their per capita contribution to the revenue would be so high, that after deducting what could be properly charged against them as their share of the cost of the general government, there would be far more than enough left to pay interest and sinking fund on the million. This view of the case the Chronicle wholly ignores. But we maintain that if it can be shown, as it has been in the case of British Columbia, that a province is contributing vastly more to the revenue of the country than it receives in return, and if this excess is far and away beyond the excess in the case of any of the other provinces, a good claim is made out for consideration in the matter of public works. We would not like to take the position that an estimate ought to be made of the contributions of the several provinces to the federal treasury, and that appropriations should be distributed accordingly. Canada is one country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and British Columbians are broad-minded enough to be willing that each section of the Dominion shall receive every consideration necessary for the due development of its resources and the advancement of its prosperity. Nevertheless we do hold that where it has been shown that the province has contributed many millions more than it has received, a just and equitable claim has been established for liberal treatment. The people of this province are not objecting to the major part of what they pay in taxes being spent elsewhere, but they ask that in framing the policy of public development the large amount of money which the province has contributed to the revenue, and the still larger amounts which it will contribute in the future, shall be given their due weight.

The Chronicle is inclined to charge up against British Columbia the whole cost of the Canadian Pacific railway, which it puts at $100,000,000, meaning thereby the cost to the public. We are not disposed to object to this figure, which includes the land grant as well as the money expended in construction and in subsidy. The amount is quite immaterial, for to charge a single dollar of it against British Columbia alone is to display a singularly narrow conception of the scheme of Confederation, which was consummated by the entry of this province into the Union. It is true that the terms of the bargain were that a transcontinental railway should be built, but we have yet to learn that any one supposed this railway was to be regarded as a project for the advantage of British Columbia only. We have hitherto supposed that even the Halifax Chronicle regarded the great Canadian inter-oceanic road as a national work, as something essential to the success of the confederation project, something necessary if imperial interests in British North America were to be advantageously conserved. It is true that a considerable portion of the cost of this railway was spent in this province, as the Chronicle alleges. But was not a considerable portion of the cost of the Intercolonial railway expended in Nova Scotia, and would the Chronicle regard it as just that this fact should be brought up if Nova Scotia asked for more generous treatment in the matter of public works? The Chronicle would probably reply that the construction of the Intercolonial was a part of the terms of confederation, which is quite true, but so also was the construction of the Canadian Pacific so far as this province is concerned. We cannot with propriety go harking back to the negotiations before confederation in order to determine what is just and suitable now. The Chronicle is inclined to charge the cost of the Crow's Nest Pass railway up to this province exclusively. We do not object to this entirely, but maintain that the railway, while opening a portion of the southeastern corner of the province and contributing to its progress, will be found to be of greater advantage to the merchants of the Eastern provinces and to the farmers of Manitoba and the Northwest than to any part of British Columbia except that directly along its route. We are not prepared to concede the Chronicle's claim that the expenditure in the Yukon has been for the benefit of British Columbia. The Yukon has paid for all that has been expended there, and will pay back into the treasury every dollar that parliament is likely to grant for public works there. It is highly unreasonable to charge the Yukon expenditures against this province under any circumstances, and especially because it is not true that we derive all the benefit from them. The East is benefited by what is transpiring in the Yukon country. At least we have the authority of the ministry, which the Chronicle supports, for so claiming.

We do not desire to precipitate a squabble, as the Chronicle calls it, for appropriations, but we do claim that as the people of this province are paying several times as much per head into the treasury as are the people of any other part of the Dominion, they are entitled to at least a reasonable share of consideration in expenditures. This they are not receiving, and it is time that a united effort was made by the people of the province to secure it.

A CANADIAN ANTHEM.

We reprint from the Toronto Globe a poem my Mr. Arthur Cox, entitled: "Canada's Hymn of the Empire." The Globe editorially referring to it speaks of the difficulty of composing an appropriate national anthem. National hymns are born, not made. In nearly a century and a quarter of history, the United States has failed to produce one. As yet there has been no sufficient incentive in Canada to call one out. The actual words do not count for very much. In witness of this our own National Anthem may be cited. There is reason to fear that if some one had composed that poem last week and offered it to any of the magazines, it would have been declined with thanks. But we sing it with enthusiasm and will continue to sign it, with such verbal changes as the changes in the succession to the throne shall require, as long as the Empire stands. It is a fine poem, just the same. It is expressive of the British idea, and that is its secret of immortality. The first verse is a declaration of personal devotion to the sovereign; the second recognizes the overruling power of God in the affairs of nations; the last is a reminder that the tenure of the kingly office is dependent upon respect to the laws. The lines have a dogged sort of repetition in them, as though a good thing could not be too strongly impressed upon all whom it concerns. As for the music, as Dr. Haweis says, it is simply an expression of "British down-rightedness." Repetition again, and of a very simple musical phrase, is all there is of it. Yet it has been sung oftener and by more people—for the people of the United States sing the air to their nearest approach to a national hymn—than anything else that ever was composed.

MR. CROFT'S PROPOSAL.

The proposal which Mr. Henry Croft has made to the city council in regard to filling in James Bay and constructing a bridge is worthy of the best consideration of the citizens. It is not wholly new, for it was talked about a few years ago. If it is acted on it will to a certain extent interfere with Mr. Sorby's harbor scheme, but we do not think that it would prejudicially affect it. It will relieve that scheme of the cost of a large amount of dredging and the erection of a bridge, and though it will also deprive it of some of the revenue contemplated, probably one would about offset the other. We are inclined to think the gain to the harbor scheme would be greater than the loss. We do not suggest that this consideration determines the matter in any way, but it is an element that will be taken into account and very properly so. Our own view of the matter is that if the proposed improvements at James Bay is made, the complete improvement of the harbor would be more readily brought about.

Without committing the Colonist to the advocacy of Mr. Croft's proposal, into which we desire to make fuller inquiries than can be made off-hand, we confess to being favorably impressed by it. Perhaps one thing which leads to this is the hope that if the proposal is accepted something definite will at last be done towards the permanent improvement of Victoria. If a beginning is made, more improvements will follow. The proposition of reclaiming the bay and building a new bridge as a single project has always commended itself to this paper. The devotion of the reclaimed land to the proposed purposes is not objectionable, but quite the reverse. The question of terms remains to be considered. The city will be relieved of the cost of a bridge, say $120,000, and in consideration thereof will give up the use of the land at the head of the bay for fifty years. This is equivalent to a payment in advance of $120,000 for rental of land at present of no value whatever. We suppose that a full calculation would show such a payment to be equivalent to at an annual rental of more than $3,000. Any one can determine this for himself by reference to a table of annuities. In addition to this, the city will receive at the end of the fifty years a valuable improved piece of property. On the face of it this seems very favorable.

SOME OBJECT LESSONS.

Very frequently the lesson of familiar things is lost upon those who know them best. An observation made by the Right Honorable Leonard Courtney in the last Contemporary Review illustrates this. Speaking of the Treaty of Ghent between Great Britain and the United States, by which these two nations agreed not to maintain war vessels on the Great Lakes, he points out that the principle of this agreement has led to the extraordinary condition of things, which leaves a frontier of three thousand miles between the Republic and the Dominion practically unfortified. He asks how many fortifications would have been erected, and how many soldiers would have been kept by both countries under arms, if the agreement of 1812 had not been religiously observed by both parties in the spirit and the letter.

The effect of this agreement upon the development of republican institutions in the United States must have been very great. It enabled that country to practically dispense with a standing army, than which there is no greater menace to republicanism. One can readily imagine that the history of the Republic would have been vastly different if, instead of being left free to cultivate the arts of peace, except when interrupted by domestic troubles, its people had been compelled to fortify and guard their long frontier. It is questionable if Great Britain would not have regarded the maintenance of her territorial strength on this continent too dearly bought at the cost of building and garrisoning a chain of forts from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The arguments of the Manchester School would have received new and almost irresistible force from such a condition. It may be fairly claimed that the statesmen, who are responsible for the provision in the Treaty of Ghent above referred to certainly built much wiser than they knew. Their work seems almost like an inspiration.

Another object lesson of special interest in this connection is the neutralization of Belgium and Switzerland, which has enabled those countries, though surrounded by military powers, to remain substantially disarmed. It is pointed out that if these two countries can be neutralized, others can be. Among those mentioned as available for this purpose are Spain, which is cut off from the rest of Europe by the Pyrenees, with only Portugal for a neighbor, and Portugal need not be reckoned with; Italy, which can easily be isolated in politics, as she almost is geographically; Denmark, to which a similar observation applies; and Scandinavia, which is practically separated from Continental Europe. If these four nations could be disarmed, they would make with Belgium and Switzerland six which would be relieved from the burden of militarism. If nothing more than this could be brought about, the gain to civilization and the cause of peace would be enormous. The disarmament of Italy would be the end of the Triple Alliance, but that combination has of late been rapidly losing its value.

These two object lessons show that in spite of all the apparent difficulties in the way, it may be possible to reach some definite arrangement for the preservation of peace. No one expects such a plan of neutralization, as is above outlined, to be carried into effect as the result of the present conference, but it may be kept in view as a possible consummation to be reached at an early day.

MR. TURNER'S DISMISSAL.

The correspondence relating to the dismissal of the Turner ministry has been laid before parliament. Whether any further action will be taken by the British Columbia members we do not know. We feel considerable objection to assenting to the proposition that the representatives of other provinces should be asked to pass upon a constitutional question affecting British Columbia. The people of this province are surely fully able to take care of their own rights in this respect. At the same time, as the question involved in the dismissal is one of very great general importance, it is highly desirable that it should be discussed by gentlemen, whose long political experience entitles their opinions to weight in matters of this nature. There are many such in parliament, and some opportunity ought to be found for ventilating the right of lieutenant-governors in this respect. In order not to create a wrong impression, we may add that parliament has no right by resolution to define what constitutional practice in the provinces ought to be. This is a matter which the people of each province, either through the legislature or at the polls, must decide for themselves. But in the colonies, as in the Mother Country, parliamentary and constitutional law has rarely, if ever, been expressed in the form of resolutions. When we seek for information upon this subject, we look to the speeches of statesmen delivered from time to time in parliament. It is precedent in action, not the passage of formal resolutions, which determines the British Constitution. Therefore we do not expect, nor do we think it likely that the government would permit, the passage of any resolution dealing with the action of Lieutenant-Governor McInnes; but it is perfectly competent for the British Columbia members to call forth an expression of opinion from the best constitutional authorities in the house on the subject. If the correspondence sets forth all the facts, as they are known in British Columbia, we feel confident that the position taken by the Colonist at the time of the dismissal will be sustained by those best qualified to speak, irrespective of their party affiliations.

We take exception to the following paragraph in the Lieutenant-Governor's letter as brought down:

I submit that a lieutenant-governor under no constitutional law existing should give reasons for the dismissal and outgoing of a ministry, but only to the incoming ministry, and I am prepared if called on to state and defend such reasons in parliament.

We do not claim to be able to cite any authority requiring a lieutenant-governor to give his reasons to an outgoing government for dismissing them, but we submit this question is not involved in the case under consideration. Lieutenant-Governor McInnes did give the outgoing ministry his reasons, or at least some reasons, although the correspondence suggests that he had others which he did not give. Our exception is to his implied opinion that he has a right to state and defend his reasons to parliament. If by this he means the federal parliament, we object that he cannot state and defend them there, for that parliament would refuse and ought to refuse to allow him to be heard. If he means the provincial legislature, we object that it is for his ministers and not for him to state and defend his reasons. The question is not if he is prepared to state and defend his reasons, but if a ministry responsible to the people is prepared to do so. It may be taken for granted that he is so prepared, otherwise he would not have done the act complained of. The constitutional principle is that he must find a ministry who will do this. If he has found such a ministry, the public is not yet aware of the fact, for the reasons for the dismissal of the Turner ministry have never yet been stated by the Semlin ministry in the legislature and been defended.

FOLLY AS SHE FLIES.

Some people in the United States are just now treating their fellow countrymen to a most remarkable exhibition of folly. The occasion of it is the expected return of Admiral Dewey from the Philippines. The demonstration began with a furious demand from the Pacific Coast that he should not be allowed to come home by way of Suez, as his orders are and as he desired. Now that it is settled that he will come that way, there is a crazy outcry in the East for a wild reception to him. That he ought to be right royally received, every one will admit. People in European countries do not go quite crazy over a general or an admiral who does good work abroad, but then they are more used to it than our neighbors. Some of the proposals in regard to Dewey are the emanations of extraordinary minds. Thus one chap wants to have a huge kite made, which will carry up a huge flag, so that the first sight to greet Dewey will be the Star Spangled Banner in the sky. Somebody else thinks the New York governor ought to send a special message to the legislature asking it to make an appropriation to defray the expenses of Dewey's welcome. Some of the newspapers want to present him with a house and after a lot of fuss have raised $3,000 towards it. Others want a national subscription of $250,000 to enable him to retire in comfort. Others think that every available vessel ought to steam out upon the Atlantic to meet him. And so it goes. The variety of suggestions is only equalled by their absurdity. No one thinks it worth while to ask the Admiral if he wants to be treated like a curiosity. No one thinks it worth while to consult his wishes in the slightest degree. If the hysterical patriots could have their way, Hobson's disgusting kissing procession around the country would be repeated. The hopeful side of the case is that the Admiral may delay his return long enough for the good sense of the people to prevail, so that when he does come he will be accorded a reception in keeping with his achievement and his character. Those who know him best say he is a retiring gentleman, and the public know that he showed himself a commander of resourcefulness and courage. To treat such a man as though he were a part of a circus parade is humiliating.

PASSING COMMENT.

Miss Flora Shaw, writing in the London Times, recommends that when a young Englishman settles in the Canadian Northwest, he should bring his sister with him. Yes; or some other fellow's sister.

The Seattle Weekly thinks that the published statements in regard to the Philippines, Dewey and other things connected with the late war show the necessity for an able-bodied fool-killer in the United States. Most people will agree with the Weekly.

The Winnipeg Tribune replying to a paper which spoke of new railways in the West as "duplicating the C.P.R.," points out that there are vast stretches of territory which the C. P. R. does not and cannot serve, and therefore to speak of duplicating that line is to create a false impression.

The Manitoba Free Press is inclined to doubt the story of a man, who is alleged to be 103 years old. What would our Winnipeg contemporary say to the reply to a Puget Sound kloochman, who on being asked by a reporter how old she was, replied: "Not know certain, but guess maybe two tree hundred years."

The New York Independent thinks we may expect in the course of a few years to travel safely by rail as a regular thing at from 125 to 150 miles an hour. Perhaps so, but we are not quite sure why any one should want to travel at such a rate of speed except on business of a very urgent kind. Surely such a trip could hardly be taken for pleasure.

The Columbian contradicts a statement made in our Vancouver correspondence to the effect that it wanted Perrier to have a new trial. We are sorry to have misrepresented our contemporary's views.

The Nanaimo Review is of the opinion that the combination now in office in this province cannot stand long and that it would not be difficult to form a much stronger government. It favors the disregarding of federal lines.

Of course it is the Toronto Telegram that sneers at the Victoria fire department, and equally of course the Vancouver Province that copies that observation. These two papers have one thing in common, namely, hatred of Victoria.

The Mail and Empire concludes from the spring catch that the sealing industry is not suffering at all from pelagic sealing and therefore expresses a hope that the Canadian commissioners to the Anglo-American conference, if it re-assembles, will not concede the American claim that the supply is diminishing.

The Montreal Witness finds fault with Senator Mills for not making better use in a legislative way of the Upper Chamber, which he might very well do as the representative of the government in that body. Mr. Mills seems to have come to the conclusion that the Senate is of no use any way. Senator Wark, who is now ninety-five years of age and a member of the same party as Mr. Mills, took strong ground in the opposite direction, claiming that the Senate ought to be given the initiative in much more legislation than at present. We agree with the Witness that the Senate should have some other functions than the making of verbal amendments to bills.

The Times finds fault with what the Colonist has said about trades unions and says their history in Canada has been entirely creditable. What we have been talking about was trades unions in certain parts of the United States.

We shall look with interest for the full report of the debate on the resolution favoring a permanent railway commission. It was understood a year ago that the government were favorable to the idea, and it will be interesting to know why a change has come over the spirit of its dream in this regard.

Plucky little Japan is squaring off at Russia, and China has made up her mind that Italy shall keep out of her territory. The Pekin authorities seem to have realized that they must draw the line somewhere, and they have drawn it at Italy. To be kicked out of Africa by Abyssinia and to have China shut the door in her face will be decidedly humiliating for the Italian kingdom.

We do not know anything about Mr. Croft's James Bay scheme, but most earnestly hope that, when he puts it before the public, some one will not come to the front with another, in which the i's are dotted differently or a longer cross is put on the t's. For goodness sake let us try and deal with something on its merits and not by comparison with some other thing, which no one can tell whether we can get or not.

An English scientific gentleman has figured it out mathematically that the safest speed on a bicycle is eleven miles an hour. At this speed, he says, equilibrium is more easily maintained than at any other. At eleven miles an hour he says a rider can safely let go his handle bars and steer the machine by the motion of his body, and he goes on to argue that there is no reason why bicycle riders should not sit up erect in their seats and use their hands for any purpose. If they go faster than eleven miles an hour they are in danger of an upset if they take their hands off the bars, and so also if they go slower.

The best opinion now seems to be that Andree's balloon alighted somewhere in Northeastern Siberia and that his fate will be soon determined. There seems to be no doubt that about two months after he set out on his aerial voyage a balloon was seen by the inhabitants of a village in Siberia. It was of course impossible that the original balloon could have kept afloat for such a length of time, and the explanation given is that Andree had constructed a fire balloon as a signal, which seems to be borne out by the fact that the object described by the villagers was visible only for about fifteen minutes. It is thought that the condensed provisions carried by the party, with what game they may have taken, would be sufficient to keep them alive until the present, if no accidents befell them.

The Montreal Gazette draws attention to the fact that the increase in bank deposits in Canada during the last four years is over seventy millions of dollars. This is a large sum, but when it is added that it is nearly 70 per cent. we must joint with the Montreal paper that "if in other departments of wealth Canadians have added to their accumulations in proportion to their accumulation of bank credits the state of things is certainly remarkable."

The Nelson Tribune wants to see "The Labor Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1894" applied to the dispute between the mine owners and the miners for the purpose of avoiding difficulties arising under the eight-hour law. We do not see that any remedy lies in this direction, unless both parties are willing to have the matter settled under the act. The government cannot compel men to work for less than they demand, nor employers to pay more than they think they can afford. The act only authorizes the settlement of disputes brought within its purview by the voluntary act of the parties to them.

"Hurrah for Victoria!" says Mr. Sorby, and the Times echoes it. We observe that neither exclaims "Hurrah for Senator Templeman!" The Senator appears either not to have known how to help the city, or not to have tried.

Owing to an incompetent man being left in charge, the gates in the Matsqui Dyke were left open, and for this year at least a great public work, costing something like $140,000, is useless to protect the farmers for whose benefit it was constructed. Everything this government touches, it seems to spoil.

AN IRON FOUNDRY AT SEA.

A foundry at sea had not been heard of before the cruise of the Vulcan. Whatever other kinds of naval repair work had been executed heretofore on board ship, that of making large brass and iron castings had not been attempted. In her facilities for this new line of work the Vulcan stands preeminent and alone. That the unique equipment for foundry work was successful is more than shown by the fact that thousands of pounds of iron and brass castings were made and finished for the ships of the fleet. The brass furnaces were kept in almost constant service, sometimes running off two heats a day, and making it necessary to carry the work far into the night, much to the discomfort of the men, who were trying to get some sleep and rest before another day's work. In iron casting no more than one heat was run off in a day and that usually about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. For after filling the moulds and dropping bottom, it was practically impossible to do much more in that part of the ship till the next morning. Kipling has sung for the Scotch engineer and stoker, but there was no heaven-born genius on board the Vulcan to treasure up the memories and scenes incident to dropping bottom. The usual luxuries of such work ashore were entirely missing. Like the fiery furnace of old, the heat seemed seven times more intense than it was wont to be ashore.—Gardiner C. Sims and W. S. Aldrick, in The Engineering Magazine for June.

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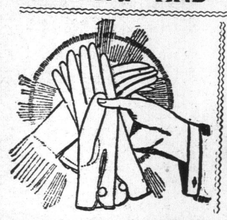
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BORN.

CULLUM—In this city, at 12 Caledonia avenue, on 29th inst., the wife of W. J. Cullum, of a daughter.

AIKMAN—At Oak Villa, Lake District, on the 22th inst., the wife of G. W. Aikman, of a son.

DIED.

LE GEYT—In this city, on the 23rd inst., William Alfred Le Geyt, a native of the Isle of Jersey; aged 43 years.