

and give your reasons for the objections you entertain. You state that your expressions are full and honest. Of this I feel no doubt, and I am induced in return to give you some honest explanations. Though I do not observe appended to the petition many of the names most familiar to me in Cariboo, yet the opportunities of direct communication, between the Governor and the mining population, are so few that I am willing, for the purpose of replying, to consider your petition as expressing in some measure the opinion of the miners of British Columbia.

The general principles of the Bill, which has now become law, were adopted by the Legislative Council before my arrival in the Colony. Understand that I am not wishing to throw any of the responsibility that belongs to me on others. I shall not assent to any measure that I am not prepared to defend. The law I found in force, and which has now been repealed, contained the objectionable and unusual clause, that the value of the commodities introduced to this Colony should be calculated at the place of import; thus taxing freight, and making the ship while on her voyage contribute to the support of the Public Institutions of this Colony. The rate of duty appeared in the tariff to be so much, whereas at the Custom House a very considerable additional tax was added. Many of the miners of the Colony were not aware of this arrangement, and a comparison of the Schedules attached severally to the late and the present Acts was calculated, with them, to give rise to the impression that large additional duties have been imposed, an impression totally unfounded, where articles are water-borne to this Colony from the place of their growth or manufacture. In all such cases the duties are now lower than they were; and if you see the Import Duties estimated in our Ways and Means as more productive than last year, it is because we expect to have a much larger population in the Colony, not that we have a wish or an expectation to raise an additional cent in the Import Duties from any one of you. But, your own practical experience may lead you to say that at the present moment you pay a heavier Import Duty than you did last year. I reply that goods landed and stored at Victoria still pay, in conformity with the principles of the new measure, a duty higher than those coming direct from the place of their manufacture or growth.

It will probably be represented to you, in the town from which you address me, that the late Customs Act has been drawn upon principles hostile to Vancouver Island. Such is not the case. All the products raised by the agriculture or manufactured by the skill and industry of the sister Colony receive, from her proximity, a protection in our markets. The beer, the cider, the carriages, whatever is made or grown on the Island, enters on highly favourable terms into competition with similar articles introduced from California or Europe. If Vancouver Island is not in a position to profit by this beneficial arrangement of our law, you will see that that is no reason why Victoria should, by doing the principal commercial operations of this Colony, levy a toll on all we use or consume.

But I by no means wish to deny that there is an appearance of unfriendliness towards the place from which you write, and I doubt not but that the expressions of "unjust and inequitable," which you apply to our recent Legislation would find wide echo there. But the reasons which induced me to give my sanction to the new law were exactly the reverse of those attributed by you to the Legislation of this Colony.

It is beyond all things, just and equitable that a community, like an individual, should make arrangements for the payment of the debts it may incur. You are aware that British Columbia has been a large borrower of money, laid out, you will allow me to say, almost entirely in facilitating access to the Gold Mines, and thus reducing the expense of living there. What is the security of this debt? We can hardly flatter ourselves that the Colony which most of you, gentlemen, leave by the very first opportunity when the mining season closes, would have sufficient attractions to induce you to return to our gold creeks if richer temptations offered themselves elsewhere. The non-resident traders who derive nearly all the profit from the commercial transactions of this Colony are not, of course, in any way liable for its debts. The best security would be in a resident population, and it is but reasonable that those who have made of this Colony their home, at whatever risk, should have the larger share of the profits of its commercial transactions. Let the Merchants who wish to share in the benefits come to the Colony, and share likewise the risks; and I would venture to remark that if you and the other Miners, who now live but half the year in British Columbia, were to remain here during the twelve months the taxation would fall much lighter on all.

You will perhaps here observe; why we do not, by accepting the proffered union with the neighbouring Colony, extend our responsibilities and area of taxation over the Merchants of Victoria, and the Miners who spend their winter in that town? I do not feel called upon to pronounce, now, an opinion on this subject, but I would observe that no proposal for union, which offered any prospect of acceptance here, was made in Vancouver