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FREDERICTON, 4th FEB. 1846.

Mr. Editor,

The present session of the Legislature was opened by Sir William Colebrooke, in the usual manner, by a very good speech to both Houses. The speech makes no mention of the difficulties which arose last year, nor of the subsequent proceedings resulting therefrom.

As I intend to write you a few letters in the old way, I shall by way of preface, briefly state the causes which brought the Government of the Province into its present condition.

Your readers all know that the Governor, the Legislative Council, and the House of Assembly, make the laws, and that no act can pass and be in force unless the Governor and a majority of the Members of each of the two Houses agree to the same. In addition to these, there is another Body, called the Executive Branch. This consists of the Governor and a number of Gentlemen called the Executive Council, and their business is to give effect to various Legislative enactments, to appoint persons to fill offices, and to discharge several other public duties. The Governor is bound by instructions from the Queen to consult his Executive Council in all matters of importance, and the Council being so consulted, are accountable to the House of Assembly for the Governor's executive doings. The Governor however, after due consultation, has power to act contrary to the opinion of his Council, but "when his acts are such as the Council do not choose to be responsible for, they are at liberty to resign."

Under the operation of these principles, the Government of this Province was strictly conducted by Sir William Colebrooke until the death of Mr. Odell, the Provincial Secretary. Mr. Reade was then appointed to fill the vacant office without consulting the Executive Council, upon which four of them resigned, protesting against the appointment. The other four approved of the proceedings and remained. In this state of things, the House of Assembly was called upon for an expression of its feelings in relation to a largely unjustly disapproved of the Governor's conduct, and approved of the conduct of the retiring Councilors.

It soon became absolutely necessary to form either a new Executive Council, or to add as many as would form a legal quorum for the dispatch of business, and thus not being done, the House of Assembly, after having some time, passed a vote of Want of Confidence in the Executive Branch of the Government. The Governor then retaining his old Council as added thereto two gentlemen out of the House of Assembly, who voted in his favour, and who approved of Mr. Reader's appointment. This gave a good deal of dissatisfaction to some, and on a discussion which ensued one of the Executive Members set the House at defiance. After some deliberation, the Members generally agreed to go on with the business of the Session, and to refer the whole matter to the Queen. An address to Her Majesty was accordingly prepared, handed to the Governor, and by him sent off on the 25th of last February. The business of the Session was concluded without further difficulty, and the House prorogued on the 14th of April.

Some time last Summer a dispatch arrived commanding Sir William to dismiss Mr. Reade and appoint Mr. Saunders in his room. This was immediately done. He was also directed to call back his retired Councillors, and Messrs. Johnson, Chandler, and Hazen, were summoned to resume their seats at the Council Board. They attended, but receiving unsatisfactory answers to some of their enquiries, they were unable to continue, and so resigned a second time. Since then all kinds of reports about a new election of a new council, a new Governor &c. have been circulated; the House however was called together and met the old Governor, in the usual manner, on the 29th of last month.

On the first day of the Session, Col. Allen informed the House, that the Executive Councilors had resigned, and that the Governor would endeavour to appoint a new Council which would be approved of by both branches of the Legislature. This was "glad tidings of great joy" unto many, and was received as a pledge that the business of the Session would proceed harmoniously.

The Speech was taken up in the usual manner and discussed, and the several subjects recommended therein referred to select committees. The debate thereon was interesting so far as it related to the position of the Executive Government, the dispute with Canada about the Boundary line, and Mr. Gregory's abstract of the Parish School Reports. The address in answer to the speech was agreed to as the Committee reported it, and was presented to Sir William by the

To day a Bill brought in by Mr. Boyd to assess the County of Charlotte, passed the House without opposition.

In answer to a question put by Mr. End [di

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Your's
JACK ROBINSON.

RAILWAY MATTERS.

To the Editor of the Colonial Gazette.

Sin.—The importance to Great Britain of colonial possession is, by every enlightened statesman, as well understood as the formal discussion of the subject is at present unnecessary. That the North American province of rank among the most valuable of British colonies, is a fact too well known to require explanation or proof. That every practicable means should be employed by the Government to promote their prosperity, and unite them by firm and indissoluble ties to the parent state, is a sentiment which requires only to be mentioned, to command implicit belief. The present condition of these provinces, together with the strenuous efforts made by the United States to gain, by means of railway, a more immediate intercourse with Canada and New Brunswick, not only furnish a most favourable opportunity for granting to the British possessions in North America the incalculable benefits of an entirely colonial railway, but strongly intimate the necessity of such a measure, for the interest and advantage of the British Government and nation.

It is not our intention to enter into a minute detail of the disastrous consequences about to ensue from the extension of American railways into Canada. Let it be sufficient to observe, that the immediate effect, in a commercial point of view, will be to turn a large portion of Canadian traffic into the United States, and to give a profitable shipping trade to the latter, at the expense of the lower provinces and Quebec. Whatever social or political consequences might be produced by this cause, it is evident that these will have no tendency to cherish the amicable feelings toward England that are now expressed through the length and breadth of the provinces, or to strengthen the union and harmony which subsist between the colonies and the parent state. That a railway from a seaport on the Atlantic or Bay of Fundy to Quebec and Montreal would counteract the injurious effects of the American schemes—would open up and vastly improve an immense trade—British territory—would furnish a speedy and desirable conveyance for the Maritime mails and troops—would increase and benefit Canadian commerce—would introduce into the English market a great and rapidly-increasing amount of colonial produce—would create an enlarged consumption of British merchandize—would tend to raise up a British power in America capable of keeping a wholesome check upon the grasping ambition of its republican neighbors—are truths that must forcibly strike the attention of every careful observer.—That such a railway, constructed upon economical principles, would, in a pecuniary point of view, be a successful enterprise, there can be no reasonable doubt.

Now, the question to which the most serious attention of the Government ought to be directed is, how can this project, so desirable in itself, and attended by so many beneficial consequences, be accomplished? If it be left to the unaided efforts of the colonists, it is scarcely necessary to say that the result will be a failure. If it be left to the combined exertions of British and colonial capitalists, I fear there is no reasonable ground to anticipate a more favourable result; not because money and enterprise are wanting, but the difficulty is to satisfy British capitalists of the practicability of the undertaking, and of its returning when completed an adequate remuneration for the expenditure. They, with commendable caution, would require the inhabitants of the provinces to subscribe for a fourth part of the stock, and would insist that the Government should have confidence in the colonists, and that they are assured of its being ultimately successful; and if the latter refused, as they probably will, to take stock to any considerable amount, the conclusion will be immediately drawn that the project is bad, and the prospect of success more than doubtful.

This conclusion, however just and natural it may seem, is nevertheless erroneous. There are various causes to deter American colonists from engaging in railway speculation, even under circumstances which in England would be considered most favourable. To them, railway schemes are a novelty,—they are little experience in such projects, and no proofs at hand of their practicability and success. The means, too, of provincial capitalists are very limited; and such is the scarcity of money, that capital can always be safely invested at a high rate of interest. Six per cent. is the legal rate of interest, and a higher rate is frequently known stock in a bank, the credit of which is established, and which for several years had declared semi-annual dividends of four and four and a half per cent., sold at five and ten per cent. discount. A few years ago, in the province

of New Brunswick, to meet a deficiency in the revenue, Treasury notes bearing six per cent interest were issued; and, although the redemption of these notes was certain, they were sold in the market at a great discount,—many of them not realising more than eighty-five or ninety per cent.

Stock paying six per cent. per annum would in London doubtless be considered an excellent investment; and yet, if it could be demonstrated that the contemplated American railway would pay to the shareholders this rate of interest, from what has been stated it is evident that few colonial subscribers could be obtained; and even if it would return eight per cent. no very great amount of stock could be sold. Colonists are not disposed to embark capital in any speculation, where there is not what appears to them a certainty, or at least a strong probability, of realising large profits. This being the case, notwithstanding the fact that the railway project is now briskly agitated in the colonies,—that the colonial legislatures and private individuals will give it their countenance, and to a certain extent their support,—that prospectuses of the Halifax and Quebec Railway Company, and forms of application for shares," were issued from Margate street in October last,—notwithstanding all this without the aid of the British Government, I fear the undertaking will be finally abandoned. British capitalists can scarcely be expected to engage extensively in a Transatlantic scheme, without reasonable assurance of a remuneration for their capital; and the colonists can only give them the required assurance by subscribing largely themselves. This they are not likely to do without a fair prospect of obtaining a much higher rate of interest for their money than capitalists in this country demand. Without, therefore, the enterprise presents the most flattering prospects, there is, if left entirely to the public, every chance for its failure.

I have certainly no desire to state any thing prejudicial to the laudable attempts now making to carry this important design into execution, nor do I conceive that any thing in this letter will have that effect. My object is not to retard the work, but to solicit more powerful and effective aid for its accomplishment. The Government of this country once took an important step in the commencement of its very scheme, at a time too when the necessity of prompt and energetic action was less urgent than it is at the present; why should they not, therefore, take another step that would be decisive of the matter, and secure to their country and its colonial offspring the advantages that are so evidently within their grasp. The precise course which the Ministry ought to pursue in this matter is not for me to determine. They might select the route, and take the chief control and management of the affair into their own hands; or they might guarantee an annual sum to any company that would complete the railway, and carry the mails regularly, and the troops when required. The latter measure would create that public confidence in the project which would enable its promoters to dispose of the shares, and to carry their designs into immediate effect.

One reason for the instant action of the Government, in such a way as to determine the matter positively, is the probability that such a course would be followed by the abandonment of the Montreal and Portland scheme and any injurious effects to British interests in a political or other point of view, that might proceed from railroad communication between the United States and Canada, would thus be happily avoided, and the colonial railway left without a rival. On the contrary, if the Portland route be not abandoned, the Government can easily protect the colonial railway, should it be completed as soon as the other, by the imposition of a small duty upon Canadian produce passing over the Portland line. But if no colonial railway be constructed, and the Canadians are thus obliged to send their produce to market through the state of Maine, and afterwards in American vessels, the existing relations and arrangements between the Governments of Great Britain and the United States clearly show that such produce will be admitted into England upon the same footing as produce exported from the colonies solely through a British medium. Indeed any other arrangement would be very unfair to the Canadians, they not receiving proper encouragement or assistance to establish a line of communication through British territory, and being obliged to pay extra duty if they adopt any other means of exportation. The privilege of exporting produce through an American medium, without any duty, once granted could not easily be withdrawn, and this alone would put all future attempts to construct a colonial railway entirely out of dispute. Competition with the Portland line, without some legislative protection, would be hopeless.

Under these circumstances it is not prudent to risk the accomplishment of a work of so much importance to the uncertain action of a company. If the present opportunity pass unimproved, there is no hope of fu-

ture operations being attempted. Now is the time for the British Government to act, and to act decisively.

In writing this article it was not my design at first, to advert to the various routes for the proposed railway, which have been suggested; as the selection of a route is a matter of secondary importance, and one peculiarly the province of the Government, or a company engaging to perform the work. There is one thing, however, of which it will not be improper to take notice. Much importance has been attached to the facility of conveying troops by railway, in case of war with the United States; and an objection has been urged against the route from St. Andrew's to Quebec, which is by much the shortest and most eligible in various respects, on the ground of its being too near the frontier of Maine, and therefore in a position to be easily destroyed by the enemy. If a war with the United States on the Oregon question should take place, the completion of the railway would be too late for any available purpose in this struggle; and a war with that nation upon any other question is extremely improbable. Admit, however, that in peace it is wise to prepare for war, whether likely to happen or otherwise; yet the objection, whatever it may be worth, is of no more force against the St. Andrew's route than any of the other routes contemplated. There is not one of them that does not run for fifty or a hundred miles along the American boundary, thus affording as great a facility for committing depredations on the line, and for entirely stopping the railway communication, as an enemy could desire.

I apprehend that the defence of the British provinces from America encroachment depends on something more indestructible than railways. As long as the colonists possess the feelings and sentiments of Britons,—as long as they preserve a deep-rooted attachment to British laws and British connexion,—as long as they cherish a fond and steadfast veneration for that constitution which excites the admiration of the world,—we say of our American invaders—Let them come! Should a colonial railway *ever* be constructed, I cannot bring my feelings to acknowledge the propriety of hiving, as one writer on this subject has done, that the British provinces "*may be lost*" or even to admit the possibility of such a catastrophe. I assert that it is revolting to the patriotism of colonists, directly or indirectly to utter threats to the Throne and Government of England, that, unless, they "govern wisely and well we will cause a constitution for ourselves." The filial regard of the American colonists is not that of a child, which submits to parental authority as long as its wishes are gratified; but it is that strong and enduring affection which clings to its object through danger and difficulty,—through ~~and~~ trouble,—through good and through bad report,—and which neither neglect nor time itself can eradicate.

On the other hand, I could not conceive that the conduct of Great Britain towards her colonial possessions was that of a heartless parent, who treats his offspring with disregard, because he knows it will be patiently borne; or who inflicts injuries because he supposes that filial affection will prove too strong to permit revolt or retaliation. I cannot imagine that the colonies will receive less kindness and attention, by professing and exhibiting a devoted and unshakable attachment to the parent country; or that they will obtain greater favour and privileges, by attempting to excite her fears.

No, let not the colonists be slandered with revolt. The kind and liberal policy now pressed toward them has implanted in their bosoms principles of loyalty and patriotism. —has made their interests, as well as their duty, to maintain their connection with the parent state to the utmost of their power. In part even her Majesty's dominions are to be found more dutiful subjects or better citizens than in the North American provinces. Nowhere does our beloved Sovereign with more undivided sway, live in the hearts and regulate the minds of a loyal and grateful people. —nowhere is the name of "hero of a hundred battles" greeted with more genuine and heartfelt enthusiasm; —nowhere is the excellence of the British constitution more acutely felt, or gratefully appreciated; —nowhere do Britain's flag and Britain's glory excite more lively emotions of rapture and exultation; —and nowhere are there braver hearts or able hands to repel an invading foe, and to maintain unsullied the honour of the crown and nation.

I believe the British Government to be incapable of treating the American colonies with neglect, and therefore I cherish the hope that a measure of such deep and vital interest to them as that under review, and one by no means unimportant to this country, will be immediately and successfully promulgated. I trust the day is not far distant, when the Hudson and the Atlantic will be one, when North Carolina and the Far West will be next neighbours, — when the vast wildernesses shall be opened and become a fertile field, — when colonial prosperity and Britain's

glory shall span the broad continent of North America from shore to shore.

Yours, &c.

A BRITISH AMERICAN.

London, B.

*From the Society for the propagation of the
Gospel in Foreign parts, Quarterly
Paper.*

[illegible]

*From the Rev. Dr. S. Thomson, Missionary
at St. Stephen.*

"The Mission consists of the parishes of St. Stephen, St. David, St. James, and St. Patrick, which unitedly cover a tract of country more extensive than an ordinary English county. There is now in each parish a parish church, in good repair, and every year is set for the decent celebration of Divine Service. The congregations vary according to the church in which they assemble, and according to the season of the year. Fifty may be reckoned as the minimum, and three hundred as the maximum number in any of the churches. Severe weather, and the absence of the poorer part of the male population, sometimes detracts during the summer months from the number of churchmen whose company is to be expected on a Sunday or two, but on the other hand, the number of worshippers is at and far above the average of the year the very least of the year.

"In addition to the services of the Mission containing the usual offices of the Church of England, and the usual offices of ease, at the two principal feasts of the year, St. Stephen's, Martin's, and Michaelmas, the following are the services of the Mission, by your Lordship.

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and only married a few years before the outbreak of the war. He was the father of a family (some of whom from the parish) and the son of the parish of St. David and St. John. He was not, I believe, a single man belonging to the Church, and he was St. Patrick's, which the church was a wilderness. The whole Mission there were but eighteen communicants—and are one hundred. But some are in the parish professing to be members of the Church, now several hundreds.