

BRITISH
COLUMBIA
AND
VANCOUVER
ISLAND.

Enclosure 4 in No. 6.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, Wednesday, January 25th.

House met at 3.15 p.m. Members present—Messrs. De Cosmos, Franklin, Young, Trimble, Tolmie, Dickson, Southgate, Duncan, Cochrane, Burnaby, Carswell, Bayley, Dennes.

State of the Colony.

Encl. 4 in No. 6.

Mr. De Cosmos said he would ask that the committee have leave to consider the internal condition of the Colony.

Mr. Burnaby asked the hon. senior member for Victoria to lay before the House the resolutions he had prepared.

Mr. De Cosmos replied that he was then re-writing them.

Mr. Young said a great deal of irrelevant matter had been delivered in the House on this question of the state of the Colony. The state of the Colony was all right, but the state of some men's heads was all wrong. The great want in the Colony was population. (Hear, hear.) As for the revenue he was vain enough to assume the reins of Chancellor for the moment, and show how it might be raised by a proper system of taxation. A great deal had been said about a tariff, but we would see what good it would do. The hon. gentleman alluded to lumberers not being benefited by a tariff, nor tailors and shoemakers, &c., who had now as much as they could do; he also alluded to a brewer who was the greatest protectionist in the Colony, but who would not get his grain any cheaper with a 20 per cent. tariff. The position of this Colony was such as to make it a great commercial emporium, and it was such already. It was asked how we were to get the gold of British Columbia. Why, by going to dig it out, as so many of our people did. As to the estimates asked for, if we thought them too large, all we had to do was not to vote them; and he could not see any reason why they should be larger this year than last. As to customs, the cost of collecting would be enormous, to prevent the smuggling, for which such great facilities were afforded by our numerous bays and inlets. What was to hinder our farmers from competing with foreign farmers? Why, because they had not the land. This was destined to be a mineral country, not an agricultural. He could not see in any way how this Colony was to be benefited by taxation. If a man pays 20 per cent. more taxation, how can it benefit him? Suppose a man paid \$10 for a coat last year, and this year has to pay \$12 for the same, what is his advantage? He thought \$150,000 could be struck off the estimates very easily, by dispensing with lazy clerks who did nothing, and constables who played euehre in public houses and such like. He certainly could not see the benefits of a tariff, and would, therefore, do all he could to oppose it.

Mr. De Cosmos submitted the following resolutions to the committee—

RESOLVED:—

That this House, after having taken into consideration the present state of the Colony, is firmly convinced that it is expedient at the present time to observe the strictest economy in the public expenditure compatible with the efficiency of the public service; and that the immediate union of this Colony with British Columbia, under such constitution as Her Majesty's Government may be pleased to grant, is the means best adapted to prevent permanent causes of depression, as well as to stimulate trade, foster industry, develop our resources, augment our population, and ensure our permanent prosperity; and this House pledges itself, in case Her Majesty's Government shall grant such union, to ratify the same by legislative enactments if required.

RESOLVED,—

That the above resolution be transmitted to his Excellency the Governor, with the respectful request that he may take the same into his earnest and immediate consideration.

Mr. Burnaby said he had hailed the resolutions with satisfaction on their first appearance as connected with the consideration of the estimates. These estimates were, he must confess, rather startling in amount in proportion to the revenue of the Colony. (Much of this hon. gentleman's speech was inaudible at the reporter's table.) He was sorry to hear some people, who had formerly held different opinions, say that, even if the country stood alone as a separate Colony the system of taxation must be changed and a tariff imposed (no, no). If we stand alone as a Colony we must stand in a respectable and honourable position before the world. We must pay our Governor's salary, and maintain a proper establishment. We must persist in our system of direct taxation. He was free to admit that taxation here was very unequally divided, and would wish to see it arranged so as to touch all classes; but if we stood alone we must have direct taxation (hear, hear). Some two years ago at the general election a pledge was exacted from nearly every hon. member of this House in favour of the free port, and they could not have got in without it. At that time also the union question had come up, and he (Mr. Burnaby) had entertained and expressed the views that we were not prepared for union. His views of that date as to the free port and union were unchanged, and his faith in the resources of the Colony were still as strong as ever. Since that period gold had been discovered on the Island; it had got to be developed, but it was here beyond a doubt. Again the new district of Kootenay in British Columbia was pronounced to be highly productive. We had been told that the free port was a failure. He respectfully demurred to that proposition. True a great depression had existed here for some time. During the whole of last year a most severe financial pressure had been felt in England. In California, in addition to drought and hard winter, a severe prostration had occurred in mining affairs. Again in British Columbia vast sums had been expended in works, trade, mining, &c., which had not produced as yet the remuneration which was expected. All this had, to a certain extent, caused a temporary depression, and he was sorry to say that the temporary stagnation and depression had been turned to a bad account by what he might term a sort of assiduous journalism. The free port had been gradually and cautiously attacked during the last nine months. The attack commenced first by letters in the papers, followed by sly insinuations against the policy of free trade; the country had to be inoculated with the feeling, and he must admit it had been well and skilfully done. All the troubles and depression in the Colony had been carefully attributed to it, and now the remedy proposed was the imposition of a tariff. This change in public opinion, which the hon. senior member for Victoria dignified by the title of a great revolution, he